

SCHOOL FOR HORSE AND RIDER

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Plate I.

A 'double oxer' beautifully negotiated

SCHOOL FOR *HORSE* AND *RIDER*

BY

CAPT. J. E. HANCE

FOREWORD BY

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I DEDICATE THIS BOOK TO MY WIFE AND FAMILY AND TO
MY GREAT FRIEND COL. F. G. G. BAILEY, WITHOUT WHOSE
UNITED HELP I SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PUT
TO THE TEST IN MY SCHOOL THOSE THEORIES WHICH
I NOW SET DOWN IN PRINT

FOREWORD

THERE is nobody better qualified to write a book on Equitation than Captain Hance, as since he left the Army he has continued to devote his whole time and attention to the subject. If Captain Hance has theories on the training of riders and their mounts, they are the result of his many years' practical experience at his own establishment at Malvern and elsewhere.

The summary of his teaching system he has put together in simple language in this book. He points out the reasons for the methods he recommends, and brings out most clearly that common sense is the basis of all teaching of riders and training of horses. His understanding of the psychology of both rider and horse gives this book its particular value.

Another point which I am very glad to see he emphasises is that the more highly trained the rider and horse are, the greater the pleasure and interest to be derived from riding, and that this applies in the hunting-field as much as anywhere else.

I am quite certain therefore that this book will be of interest to beginners and also to those who already have greater knowledge of Equitation.

EBRINGTON.

May 16th, 1932.

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SCHOOL FOR RIDER

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INTRODUCTION

IN my career as a riding instructor, if one outstanding fact has been borne in upon me, it is that the enemy of the Teacher is Time. However competent the instructor or apt the pupil, the course of (ten or possibly a few more) lessons, so popular in civilian life, fails because on its completion the pupil is left, like a rudderless ship, "to pick up" the rest by haphazard experiment upon a horse.

It is possible, however, by the adoption of certain rules and principles, for the "unfinished" pupil to ride *progressively*, and it is in the earnest endeavour to supply these rules and principles that this book has been written. But what of them? Are they the right rules and principles? I can only say that they are those by which my family and I have gained such successes as we have. They are those which, after testing, sifting and modifying, I have found sound. In practice I have often had to discard theory.

The suggestions which I have given for both teaching and training are the result of Army experience *grafted on to civilian*, and have been dependent upon their practical and commercial utility for their survival. I have laid down in black and white certain exercises which I am sure, if correctly used, will go a long way towards producing a good rider no less than a well-trained horse.

It is here, however, that I feel an explanation is due to readers. I can imagine some who will look for magic in the book and find none. They will possibly look for some freak scheme to applaud or deprecate, and because they fail in their search, I feel that many will assume that I have not "put my cards on the table," and have not told them what I really do "in the secrecy of my stronghold."

All I can say is that I have endeavoured not to leave out anything which I consider of importance, though I have purposely omitted certain complicated terms. In my experience, I have found these merely confusing to

◆◆= INTRODUCTION =◆◆

most people, both civilian and military, with whom I have come in contact. The vocabulary of the expert often deters where more simple language would have encouraged.

Finally, I would like to make it perfectly clear that I have written this book *not* in any spirit of competition with other instructors, but in order to spread more widely principles which, in my opinion, will benefit riding if more generally adopted.

In conclusion I should like to thank most heartily the following, who have assisted me in the production of this book:

My son and daughter and Miss Betty Marsh, who have demonstrated, before the camera, positions both correct and incorrect—by no means always an easy feat even for accomplished riders. I can only hope readers will agree with me that they have been extremely successful.

My artist-friend, Mr. Robert Bartleet, for his diagrams and pictorial comments on the lighter side of the subject, though nothing is too serious for his inveterate sense of humour !

Lady Sibell Lygon, Miss Olive Lloyd Baker, Mr. Walter Hanson and Mr. Victor Smith for innumerable acts of help and encouragement in difficulties, of which I had no idea until I embarked upon the venture of authorship.

Last, but by no means least, Messrs. W. W. Rouch and Co., The Keystone View Company, and Photopress for the excellent photographs.

PART ONE
SCHOOL FOR RIDER

✧ CHAPTER ONE ✧

A PRELIMINARY CANTER

TO RIDERS IN GENERAL

DURING the years in which I have taught riding since I left the Army, one fact has become increasingly obvious to me. It is this: that very great confusion abounds in civilian life as to the meaning of the phrase "to ride" and the expression "horseman." If we define the former as "to move about by means of sitting on a horse," then no doubt there is a great deal of riding done, and this country abounds in horsemen. But if we allow to creep into our definition the suggestion that any but the most elementary form of skill is required "to ride" or is possessed by the "horseman," then I must definitely state that the percentage of those people who habitually sit upon horses and may properly be described as able to ride is very small indeed. Herein lies my trouble. Students come to me for a week, a month, a year or even more, having of course in most cases previously ridden for a considerable time, generally for years. On arrival, when the actual work in the school commences they seem absolutely hopeless. Why? To be perfectly frank, they *cannot* ride horses. I do not mean they cannot be carried about by good-natured animals and even get over a country that way, but when it comes to riding a horse, well—— To quote a simple example. Through ignorance of the real functions of a double bridle, they never know half that pleasure in riding which is derived by a good horseman from the *correct* use of one.

I wonder why it has always been considered so much *infra dig.* to be taught riding. I am sure readers will realise that the first-class professional will always beat the first-class amateur at any game. Anyhow, they go to their golf, cricket, or tennis professional. So I must be excused if I repeat that I cannot for a moment understand reluctance to be taught riding with

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equal care and by equally qualified teachers. To whatever professional you are going, however, do go, if possible, before you get any bad habits. Do not go to the cricket professional after you have acquired the habit of trying to cut a ball off the wicket-keeper's hands by moving your left foot, or beat one past cover by moving your right. Like other teachers who believe they are properly qualified, I prefer you to come to me before you have learnt to turn your toes in, ride with one hand only on the reins, the other holding grimly half a hunting-crop—I mean the thong is missing. All this may not sound a great deal, but it is quite enough to go on with, and it indicates what all professionals suffer from.

If as in steeplechasing the reader names some amateurs who can live with the “pros,” it will invariably be found that, except for the fact of their private lives being in a different social sphere, they actually give as much time to the game as their professional colleagues. It is so in all games. We have excellent examples, as far as steeplechase jockeys go, in Mr. Harry Brown, who only recently stopped riding so successfully, and the present top of the amateur tree, Mr. Fred Thackray; but, as I say, both of them live the same (racing) life as the professional jockey. If Mr. Brown and Mr. Thackray have devoted their lives to steeplechasing and hurdle-racing, I have devoted a life to the teaching of riding, and if readers will take my advice, or let me help them or give them the result of my experience, I shall be more than pleased. If by writing the second part of this book I can arouse a greater interest in riding proper, no one will be more satisfied than myself.

I should like in particular to arouse interest in the riding *school*, and explain that a school, run on proper lines, and the hunting-field are not, as some people infer, as far apart as the poles. Further, my idea of a school is not a building, or an enclosure, or a fenced-in area, but one such as that shown in the illustration, and described in the chapter on “Facilities.” Most well-trained horses are trained originally in a school and subsequently join those in the hunting-field with conspicuous success. So also with human beings. Let me give an example of first-class training. In 1931 I went specially to about six different shows to see one thing, a striking

display by the 5/6th Dragoon Guards under Mr. Ansell. There was a great deal of jumping during the show, but what I went to see was six ordinary swords stuck point downwards in the ground and placed about 20 feet apart. The owners of the swords then rode down and over the line of swords, one after the other, giving the appearance of jumping a series of in-and-out jumps. I do hope that readers will not make the ridiculous mistake of calling this trick-jumping, as did some other onlookers. The horses were *schooled*, so were the men. If the same time and patience had been used to train the same horses as hunters, how much we should envy their owners! But here again it is possible to help.

If the reader knows the *system*, he—she—could make a young horse and a hunter the comparative equal of the horse which jumps the swords so accurately. It cannot be done by the rough-and-ready methods commonly used. It can only be done by a systematic schooling, which of course entails time. I fully realise that large numbers of people cannot be expected to give up years of their lives to attending a riding school. But I think this difficulty can be solved if all teachers will bear in mind the opening remarks which I have addressed to “Instructors.”

I would like to conclude what I have to say here to readers in general, by an explanation of why I attach so much importance to the exercises in a closed school, set forth in this book.

I do this because, generally speaking, especially in this country, where most people ride out of doors, they do not understand the value or the necessity of carrying out these various exercises. In addition, I am afraid that, apart from not understanding them or their value, those not interested are inclined to despise others who choose to learn them, from the commencement or later, in the school, and suggest that it is all waste of time. At the risk of being dubbed a fanatic, I do not think that one can ever become a first-class horseman or horsewoman without a school of instruction. If readers have any doubt as to the accuracy of my statement, just go to an instructor who possesses either a good menage or a closed school. If you do not know them already, get this instructor to show you some of the more simple exercises and then try to carry them out to his satisfaction. After

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that I am willing to abide by the reader's own decision. If a further example is required and you are a good horseman, try the following procedure with a *young horse*. First go into an ordinary field and *imagine* you are in a school and that you are going to keep within a certain area (you could mark the corners with stones or anything else available). Knowing the various figures used in the school, just try to carry them out in this unenclosed but limited area. When you have tried that, go back into the school and then try the same procedure there, and discover for yourself where you get the best and quickest results. One step further: a little later on, after your mount has had more training in the school, try outside again, and if the result does not speak for the value of a school, do not read or recommend others to read any more of this book.

TO INSTRUCTORS AND POTENTIAL INSTRUCTORS

To say that I or anyone else can thoroughly teach people to ride in a week or a month or a year is ridiculous; no one can. The ordinary rider in civilian life, never having had lessons, really knows little or nothing ABOUT riding. A good instructor can really give valuable help, where others—and some self-styled instructors—fail lamentably. Instructors should teach people exercises such as they can practise at any time after leaving their instructor. Instead of riding about in the pointless way that so many people do, by means of these exercises the instructed rider can always be *improving himself* because he will always have an object. It is the practice which *follows* instruction that eventually gives satisfactory results and produces the finished horseman.

There is no doubt whatever in my mind that if a school is available and is properly utilised, training progresses with infinitely greater ease and speed. But while realising the tremendous advantages of this, one point must ever be borne in mind. It is not the performance of these exercises in the school that we are really driving at, it is the good they do and the help they are going to be outside that is behind them all. I always think it is

here where many instructors fail; they let the school exercises run away with them, and seem to attach too much importance to the exercises for their own sake. This I always think gives false ideas of a school. The school and all that happens therein is to teach pupils the accurate use of the aids which will enable them to guide their mounts in a *balanced* manner. If a mistake is made in the school, it should at once be pointed out what would have been the comparative result if the same error had been committed outside. That is what the school is for—to correct errors, not to ignore them.

It is admitted as a general rule that the best system of instruction is based first on a thorough explanation of what is to be done, followed, if possible, by a practical demonstration. Of what use then, except in the elementary stages, are these “Courses of ten lessons of an hour,” attractive though they may seem? They are frequently spread over a period of a month or more. What can be taught when an instructor is tied down to an hour at irregular intervals, and with the lesson possibly taking place on a road? Just as one is obtaining a result, the instructor finds that “the hour is up” and has to take his charge home. Bad luck to the pupil who has taken up so much time in explanation!

I am perhaps more fortunately situated than many instructors, because since entering private life I think I have solved this problem. Except for “casuals,” the minimum time I take pupils for is a week. Apart from instruction in other matters, the actual hours for riding are 9.30 to 11.30 and 2.30 to 4.0. But at 5.30 each evening I have what I call, for lack of a better term, a lecture. For this lecture, however, I do not have set subjects, but use it to make clear any difficulties encountered during the day, to describe what I propose to do on the following day and why, and also to make any explanation on any subject desired by pupils, if I am able to do so. If I did not have this hour’s lecture, I could not teach and get good results. It is this daily explaining of things appertaining to riding which has given me what success I have had as an instructor, because during this period I have been able to make clear matters which were misunderstood, and by explaining the object of other exercises which could be practised after leaving, ensure that subsequent riding was not pointless. One more impor-

★===== A PRELIMINARY CANTER =====★

tant point with regard to these lectures. In training a young horse, a quiet spot, at any rate if a school is not available, is essential so that nothing distracts the animal's attention. I find the same rule essential for training human pupils. Absolute quiet, no horses to worry about, sitting down, not as instructor and pupils, but a few of us in a room discussing points of interest; after all, all points of riding are interesting. The one additional remark I should like to make is that if any explanation is made during these lectures, I always commence my next morning's work by a practical demonstration of this point.

Such are some of the methods which I have found to be successful. Each one who conscientiously instructs finds that his own system develops by a process of evolution. As fresh cases and difficulties arise, his own ingenuity must help to supply the answer and fill in any gaps in the rules which he employs. Only you who, like myself, from day to day contend with ignorance or nervousness or confirmed erroneous ideas, realise the responsibility of teaching a subject which is at once a sport, an art, and a science.

PASSIVE AND ACTIVE RIDING

When pupils start learning to ride, the first stage they pass through is known as Passive Riding. They should be mounted on horses of quiet temperament who thoroughly understand their business. As their training progresses they are given more difficult, but still thoroughly reliable, horses, until they are at home on any ordinary animal. During this stage the use of the aids will be explained to them. Before they enter on Active Riding they will be accustomed to ride trained horses over a variety of obstacles at different paces, sometimes with and sometimes without reins. I frequently tell my own pupils that if they wish to be successful riders they must ride sixty seconds to every minute. It is failure to realise the literal truth of this remark which prevents so many potentially good riders from actually becoming first class.

It will now be time for them to be taught to take an active share in

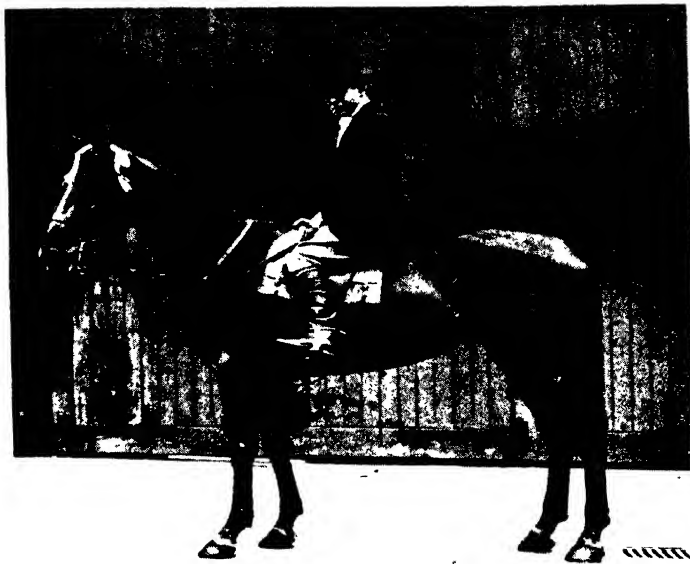


Plate II. *'Amber' (ridden by Mr. R. F. Hance), winner of the Brooks-Bright Foundation Challenge Cup, International Horse Show, 1928*



Plate III.

A well turned out side-saddle rider



Plate IV.

A good turn-out which the horse seems to appreciate



Plate V.

He clearly shows his disapproval of this

→←———— A P R E L I M I N A R Y C A N T E R —————→←

the proceedings. That is, they should learn to train and get the best out of a young or uneducated horse. This is Active Riding, which really consists of nothing but being always able and ready to apply the aids promptly and correctly. A good Passive Rider cannot be made into an Active Rider at once. It will take much practice and experience, and it is inevitable that the education of a good many horses will be delayed in the process.

When pupils have successfully passed this stage they can be encouraged to try their skill on the higher levels of Active Riding—i.e., show jumping, training polo ponies, riding hacks and *haute école*.

Any normal person can be taught to ride up to the beginning of the Active Riding stage. After that it is largely a question of natural aptitude, followed by constant exercise of knowledge gained. In this respect the art of riding is comparable to the art of painting, in which the fact that any normal persons, if properly instructed, can reproduce on paper what they see before them with much pleasure to themselves, does not blind our eyes to the existence of talent and beyond that—genius.

D R E S S

I propose to deal but briefly here with the question of dress, my object being not to go into the details of what should be worn on varying riding occasions, but rather to explain why it is important that care should be taken to *be* correct in the matter of “Kit” at all times.

It is curious that many otherwise well-turned-out people appear never to grasp the idea that certain sartorial rules exist for riding as well as for the ballroom. However much you may feel inclined to disregard fashion, remember always that first-class riding does not appear so good if its exponent is slovenly or incorrect in his attire. Quite moderate horsemanship, however, may appear proficient if the rider looks “a workman.”

Two photographs of my daughter are reproduced. One shows her

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in what, to say the least of it, I will term unsuitable kit, another in correct attire. I think that they prove my point.

My advice is this: "Go to a first-class shop; it may be more expensive, but the materials will be durable and the cut correct. On the other hand, clothes which are 'wrong' will only cause embarrassment, which will eventually lead to expensive alterations."

✧ CHAPTER TWO ✧

✧===== THE AIDS =====

UNTIL quite recently I think the real art of riding had been very much neglected in this country. Now, however, that the foreigner has compelled us to look seriously to our laurels, an ever-growing number of people are finding in true horsemanship an art which calls for the highest skill of body and mind, and one the fascination of which never palls.

There is still, however, a school of thought, composed mostly of hard riders across country, which maintains that even such a small amount of training as learning the correct use of the aids is unnecessary to make a good rider. This contention is the result of misunderstanding.

The only form of riding which has remained popular in this country of late years is hunting. So much is this the case that if the terms "hunting" and "riding" have not actually become synonymous, the latter has at least been almost entirely merged into the former. The result has been disastrous both to the art of riding and to the science of hunting. On the one hand the hunting-field, where the followers ought to be inspired with the spirit of the chase—desperately interested in watching hounds work, full of keenness to see the fox killed, who would "rather come out on foot than stop at home"—is, instead, crowded out by thrusters who do not know or do not care whether hounds are on the line. There are those who have no knowledge of the pack and who are content to go home once the sharp burst is over, without the slightest interest in whether hounds finally work up to their fox or not. No, they have "come out for a ride," they have been over or through every top rail within their range, and they have had the fun they were seeking. But that is only one side of the medal; the other is equally deplorable.

The hunting fathers of these young thrusters impressed on their sons

that, in order to see what hounds were doing, it was necessary to ride boldly over the country. To these hound-wise fathers a man who was able to live with the pack when they really ran was a good rider. The large majority of them were unaware of any further qualifications. Now, therefore, their sons, most of them with plenty of nerve and some with the money as well, which enables them to buy perfectly trained horses, are also able to keep up with hounds. Though they have lost their fathers' excuse for doing so, they label themselves "good horsemen." Thus hunting is neglected and riding brought down to the standard of the man who can "get over" a country. England is forgetting how to hunt, and neglecting to discover how to ride. But this will change. A school of thought is growing up which is learning that riding is an art not essentially connected with hunting at all. People begin to see that show jumping, *haute école*, or any other system of elaborate training, are all of them manifestations of the art of riding and not to be despised because they are not called for in the hunting-field. It is not necessary to be a "rider" in the true sense of the word at all in order to be "a good man to hounds," though naturally if both man and horse have been trained they will cross a country more effectively and in greater safety.

When Riding is again recognised and practised in this country as an independent art, I do not think it will be found that hunting has suffered. On the contrary, people then having a real understanding of riding will not be satisfied with a gallop across country to enjoy or advertise their horsemanship. They will get their serious riding in other spheres ; they will have come out now to *hunt*. Imagine a field, though possibly smaller than those seen today, whose members are all genuinely concerned with the doings of hounds, who are all in complete control of their horses, and are all prepared to jump every fence cleanly. Who can doubt that the Sport will be the gainer ?

Let, therefore, any of my readers who may feel a twinge of scorn at the mention of the word "aids" remember that though the points here insisted on may not be essential to the man who only intends to "get over" (or *through* dare I say?), they *are* essential to serious riding. We mean our great national sport no disrespect. Long may it flourish!

THE AIDS

But its foundations rest upon the love of hounds and hound-work, and the instinct to pursue, not on horsemanship. It is part and parcel of the science of *la vénerie*, intermingled with, but neither included in nor inclusive of, the art of riding.

I will now ask my readers to imagine that they are watching a class at the International Show. It cannot be denied that at Olympia are to be seen some of the highest manifestations of horse training. Year by year I am always in time every morning to see the first class come into the ring at nine o'clock, and I stay until the last jumper has finished his round in the evening. During the day I watch every one of the riding classes and many of the harness classes, and never for one single moment does it cease to thrill me.

Let my readers visualise the scene with a class going round the arena. Let them think of the criticisms they would be making on each horse. One horse in particular attracts their attention; make and shape, action, manners, paces, carriage—all are right. The rider comes in for his or her share of the general admiration. What grace! What ease! All is applause for the elegant finished performance.

Now let the reader cast his imagination back to the day when that horse was ridden for the first time. What sort of an animal had he then before him? What show could the finished rider give with him then? The make and shape were there for the expert who could see beyond the unknot form and unconditioned muscles; the action might be prophesied by the same expert who could see the swing of the shoulders and flexion of the hocks. But the paces? See the shambling walk or shuffling trot. The manners, where are they? See him misunderstand or dispute his rider's will at every corner. And carriage? An ungainly mass of horse. With his weight on his forehead and his hind-legs stretched out, what spectator has the faith to see in him the balanced and docile hero of the show-ring two or three years hence?

Everyone understands that it is training which brings about this transformation, but it is not always realised what this training actually consists

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in. It consists in an expert rider getting on the animal's back daily and talking to him in horse "language."

If anyone who possesses all his faculties, except for the fact that he is deaf and dumb, comes to me for instruction, I must learn the deaf-and-dumb language if I am to convey my wishes to him. It is the same thing with a horse, but in the case of an untrained horse he does not even know the language in which he is going to be addressed; he has to learn it from his teacher. It is not necessary for all riders to have a comprehensive knowledge of this language, any more than most of us have a comprehensive knowledge of our mother-tongue, but if horses are to be controlled at all, a colloquial knowledge is essential. Readers will notice the expression "to be controlled at all." This represents the literal truth. No rider has the slightest control over his mount unless the animal chooses to submit. Horses are so docile by nature that this is frequently lost sight of; moreover they ought never to be allowed to realise their own power. But the fact remains that we only control them by a language of signals which we teach them to understand. If they do not understand or do not choose to obey we are absolutely powerless. This language of signals, given with the legs, reins, spurs, change of position, whip and voice, is called "the aids." Let us go back to our untrained horse. On the first day he is induced to move and then to stop. His subsequent training simply consists in the rider giving signals over and over again, until the horse has learnt them off by heart and will give an instantaneous and correct response to each. Then can the rider sit back in the saddle, lengthen his rein and put his toe in the stirrup, but that day will not arrive for many months yet. The period in between is just drudgery. Correct balance, which means that the horse has the maximum control over his limbs and is thus able to give instantaneous response to his rider, is obtained in the same way. It is only constant repetition. Riders can seldom stand the monotony of this constant repetition even when they have the necessary ability.

Very few people know what it is to ride a perfectly balanced horse, and fewer still could ride one properly if they had the opportunity. This remark brings us to a really sad aspect of the affair. Imagine the trained horse to be sold to a new owner who is merely one of the thousands who



Plate VI.

A good position whilst cantering



Plate VII.

A good position at the trot



Plate VIII.

Travelling at full speed with the horse nicely balanced

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enjoy being on a horse's back, but know nothing whatever about riding. Directly he mounts his purchase for the first time the horse starts to deteriorate. Why? Because the rider is not able, or does not even know that it is his job, to convey his wishes to the horse he bestrides. Either the horse makes a frantic effort to obey some indication quite unintentionally given, is punished for "gassing," tries again, gets another job in the mouth, till sore and puzzled he finally ends up as "nappy" or unridable ; or more probably, finding that he is not reprimanded when he does not obey instantly, gradually slacks off and becomes the usual lethargic mount. To me it seems a tragedy.

I have spoken of Horse Shows so far because they afford an obvious example of horse training, but there are many other peaks in the range. Polo, show jumping, racing, etc., all require expert training and riding. Each is a speciality, and to excel in one will only supply you with a *basis* for learning the others. If the aids in general are the horse language, the special versions required for these different purposes might be called the dialects, and, like the variations of the human language, some are crude, others more cultured. It would be hopeless to try on Mr. Vivian Gooch's hack the dialect Mr. Jack Anthony's chaser understood so well. One must ride—that is, sit on and signal to—a horse in the way he has been accustomed to. So decide what you mean to do in your riding life, and then study in the sphere you have selected ! I suggest that you begin by learning to ride the average horse. Endeavour to improve whatever animal falls to your lot, and then later, if you are ambitious, specialise in whatever line choice or circumstances opens before you.

In any case first learn to ride properly, and you will continue with much greater enjoyment and safety. Even should you never aspire to the standard required for successful training, at least you will not be guilty of ruining good horses.

"HANDS"

The chief enemy of progress in riding as in most other activities of life is loose thinking, which means the use of casual phrases without understanding what they mean. In the particular subject under discussion

it is the term "good hands" and the statement that these mysterious adjuncts are "born, not made" which lull the mind of the uncritical. These phrases when properly used are a short way of expressing what would otherwise need a long description, but I sometimes wish they would go out of use so that people might be forced to consider their meaning.

Now that so much is known of mental and physical processes, it is possible to describe in exact terms what constitutes "good hands."

Imagine that the rider has his hands on the reins and the horse makes some movement that necessitates (for example) a slight increase of pressure. If the rider is to respond to the horse in a way that will justify the description of "good hands," the news of the horse's movement must be taken immediately to the rider's brain, the intelligence must instantaneously provide the right solution, and the muscle control must be so accurate and so delicate that the rider can convey his exact meaning to the horse. It must not be supposed that one transmission of messages from fingers to brain will suffice for one action; there will be a constant flow of communication between the two. The above is a very bald and incomplete outline of the processes involved.

Now let us see what may happen to impede the perfect action of these processes. If the rider has not learnt by instruction, concentration, and practice to appreciate the least alteration in pressure on his hand, the message from his mount will make no impression on his brain. This non-transmission will occur also in the case of any practised and skilful rider who happens to be day-dreaming at the moment.

Next let us suppose the message to be correctly presented to the rider's Intelligence. By Intelligence, I mean all the combined powers of the mind, such as memory, imagination, and reason. In the mind of a beginner who has had no instruction, Memory will not suggest a precedent, and it is seldom that Reason or Imagination will solve the problem correctly, at any rate within the time allowed for a proper response, especially if the pupil is naturally "slow in the uptake."

Other problems arise from the fact that even though the Intelligence may register the exact message, its reply will hardly be heard by a mind deaf with fear or clamorous with anger.

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There is a sense in which riding is comparable to fencing. The horse makes some movement and the rider responds so as to oppose or to encourage him. There is continual interplay. The rider may be right for three "passes" and then do entirely the wrong thing. "Good hands" are not a static possession. It is obvious that to ride with a loose rein having no communication with the horse's mouth is not having "good hands," but might better be described as having "no hands at all."

My advice, then, is that in all cases the lightest pressure possible compatible with comfort and control should be maintained continually on the horse's mouth.

Nothing improves a rider's hands so much as riding a young horse. The untrained mouth will force the rider to concentrate on his hands. It is a true saying that "made mouths never made hands." Long-rein driving, under the supervision of a competent instructor, is another useful exercise for improving the hands.

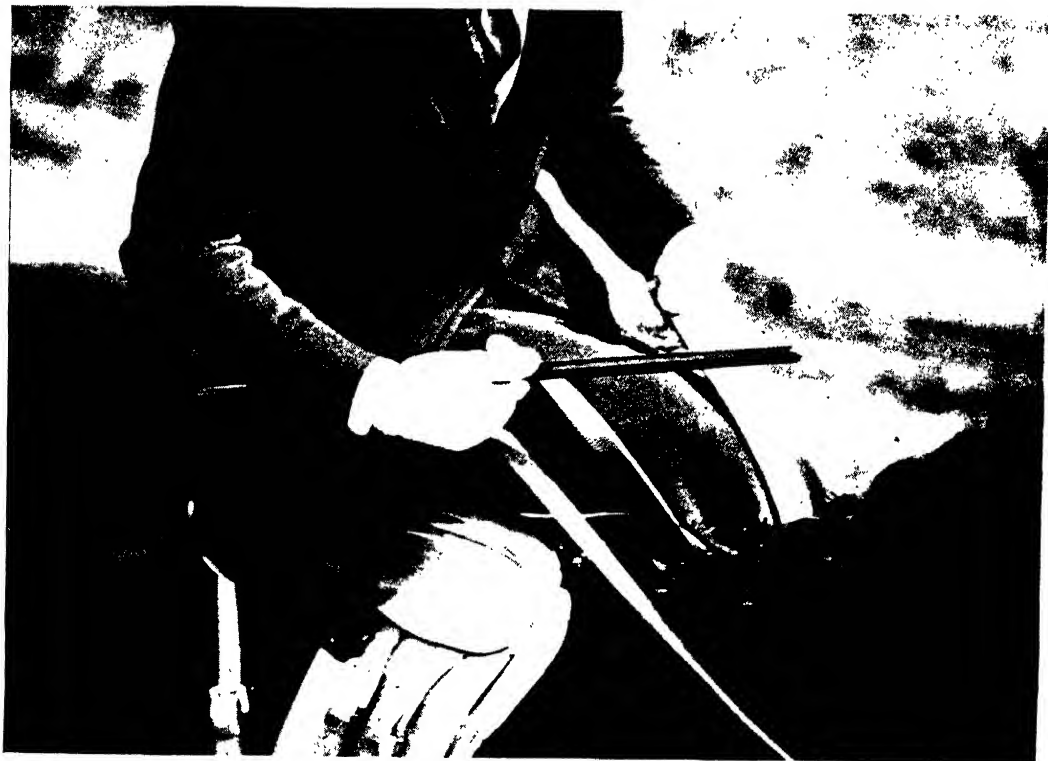


Plate IX.

The correct position of the hands



✧ CHAPTER THREE ✧

— JUMPING —

THERE is a widespread impression that learning to jump must necessarily be a difficult and terrifying process, but in reality this can only be the case when the instructor does not know his job. Jumping, properly taught, is a delightful business, for lessons are so arranged that beginners experience no difficulties in the elementary stages, and falls are eliminated as far as human calculation can do so. I very much hope that any good rider who deigns to read this chapter will carefully study the advice it contains, for good riders are sometimes asked to teach a beginner to jump, and I believe that what I have here written will be of use to would-be instructors and to their pupils. Remember, good rider, that because it is so easy for you, unless you call on your imagination you will not realise how formidable your “simple jump” seems to your pupil, nor how conscious he will be of the difference in the manner in which horses jump. And whatever you do, if you want your pupils to enjoy jumping as they should, do not “have them on the floor” if you can possibly help it.

A pupil should be taught to jump at the same time as he is being taught to ride. Nothing annoys me more than to be told that someone has learnt to ride and now wishes to learn to jump. My opinion, formed after long experience, is that when taught properly a pupil can start jumping in perfect comfort somewhere between the fifth and tenth lessons. The practice he gets in jumping will help him in his general riding. Before we start experimenting on our unfortunate pupil, let us be quite sure what it is that we intend him to achieve at each step. Nothing is more frightening and disheartening for a learner than to find that his instructor is undecided as to what he wants; so let us have our ideas clear cut before we begin.

In the first place let us decide how we wish our pupil to sit. No point

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in riding has been the subject of more discussion in late years than the rider's seat over fences. My own position in the controversy is as follows. I maintain that the end for which we should work is that the rider shall be balanced throughout the leap, and not that he shall sit here or sit there. *When training is completed* and a rider is jumping various types of fences, I consider that in order to be balanced the rider must lean his body forward as the horse takes off and then allow himself to be swung by the horse's movements. His actual position will vary with the parabola of the leap. If he is going over a small cock-fence, his body will stay forward unless he deliberately swings it back, but if it is a big fence or there is a drop, his body will make a rearward movement, though not to the extent implied by the term "sitting back." This is the theory of the "balanced seat." It must be understood that I am now referring to normal or hunting jumping, not to steeplechasing, hurdle-racing, or show jumping. Each form of riding may be said to be in a watertight compartment, and what is applicable in one might be entirely inappropriate in another.

When *learning to jump*, however, the pupil should be instructed to keep his body forward during the whole leap, and on both sides of the fence. This will give him his balance over small fences. The "forward seat" is used here as *a means to an end*, which is that the pupil shall eventually be so poised as to be able, when necessary, to lean his body back as far as, but no farther than, may be required at the end of the parabola.

I am certain that it is definitely wrong to begin a pupil's jumping education by asking him to ride over an actual fence, no matter how small. He should first be instructed how to approach the jump, what to do when the horse takes off, when landing, and after landing. When the pupil has grasped all these things, a pole 6 inches in diameter, for him to practise over, should be laid on the ground in the track about halfway down the school. This pole will be sufficient obstacle for some time to come. It is essential *that the pupil has an easy jumper to ride*—that is, a horse which jumps in an effortless manner and does not arch too much. He should follow about 6 feet behind a more experienced rider.

The pupil should be told to trot round the school with the reins and body held as for ordinary riding. When he turns the last corner before



Plate XI.

Efficient and correct jumping



Plate XII.

The ideal hunting (balanced) seat . Note nearest rider's delicate handling of reins

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approaching the pole, the reins should be somewhat lengthened and the hands kept very low so as to be *out of touch* with the horse's mouth. As the horse takes off, the pupil must lean his body forward and keep forward until the horse has landed. (All this at a trot.)

After a few lessons the pole can be raised gradually to a height of a foot or 18 inches, the distance between the two horses increased, and the pace quickened until the last few strides before jumping become a canter. The rate of progress naturally varies with individuals, but the pole in no case should be raised until the pupil is perfectly comfortable over the lower jump. Horses should be frequently changed as pupils gain confidence, though of course all must be suitable for beginners and must be automatic machines as far as jumping is concerned.

As pupils increase in confidence, they should be told to lengthen their reins, until at last they have only the end in their hands. Two or three strides after landing the reins should be (quietly) picked up, the horse guided round the school, and the procedure repeated. It is very important that the reins should not be dropped entirely when the rider has his feet in the stirrups.

It is sometimes said that jumping without reins is uncomfortable for the pupil. If the system of teaching I am here describing is properly carried out, jumping without reins is perfectly comfortable for the rider, and more particularly so for the horse.

It does not require an expert to understand that, if a jump is to be comfortable for the rider, the horse's mouth must not be interfered with in any way. If the horse has his head free, the parabola will be symmetrical, and the rider can anticipate it by sitting a certain way, so as to be balanced, and therefore comfortable during flight. If, on the other hand, the beginner has the reins in his hands, he may try to maintain his balance by grabbing at them. This will upset the parabola and, by unbalancing the rider, will make the jump uncomfortable for him and much more so for the horse.

Let me assure readers that I have taught thousands of people from all over the world, and I know that, if taught systematically, beginners are more comfortable jumping without reins than with them—that is, if they are taught

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from the commencement on the above lines. The horses, moreover, have their mouths saved from injury and so continue to jump with confidence.

This method of teaching is frequently misused by instructors, in that they will not start with the pole on the ground and allow the pupil to practise until he can poise his body correctly over that, before raising it even one hole.

The useful exercise of jumping without stirrups should not be attempted until the pupil's riding muscles are sufficiently strong to avoid the risk of being strained.

Once the pupil can sit with ease on various horses over a small jump of 2 feet 6 inches or 3 feet, training with reins (and stirrups) must begin. All the pupil has had to do so far has been to guide his horse to the fence, or the part of it he wished to jump, and then swing his body in conjunction with its movements. He must now begin to cultivate a sympathetic use of the reins. It must first be impressed on him that the reins must never interfere with the horse's freedom of action when he is jumping. The actual jump is the horse's job, and how he does it is his affair, at any rate when carrying beginners.

The pupil should be instructed to lean his body forward when the horse takes off, in the same way that he did when jumping without reins, and to move his hands in response to the movement of the horse's head and neck, making every effort to remain in constant communication with the horse's mouth. The body must go forward *over* the hands, not the hands shoot forward in front of the body. I do not endorse the statement that the hands should be "dropped" at the last stride to avoid interfering with the horse's mouth, as, if this is done, contact is lost and the animal, if so inclined, can fly out and frequently does so. It seems to me far preferable to try from the first to teach beginners the necessity of retaining a light but continuous touch on the reins, than to allow them to aim at merely getting over the fence without jobbing their horses on the mouth. During the parabola, at the end of which the head and neck will be stretched right out, the pupil must allow his horse to *take* all the rein he requires, without *giving* him any extra. If this point is aimed at from the beginning, pupils will realise how necessary it is to be able to use the reins correctly, and not only when



Plate XIII.

Jumping without reins and stirrups—correct and secure



Plate XIV

Jumping without reins and stirrups—incorrect and insecure

are content to release their horses for the executive strides some distance from the fence, and allow them to alter their strides so as to bring themselves into the take-off area according to their own judgment. There is another method in which the rider releases his horse so that two or three strides, as he has predetermined, bring the horse to exactly the ideal spot from which to take off. This is called "timing," and it takes a great deal of study and practice before it can be successfully accomplished. Whichever method is used, the riders must keep a light contact with their horses' mouths the whole of the time, and maintain impulsion with the lower part of the leg up to the moment of take-off. If they have been galloping over a field, they must steady and collect their horses some 15 or 20 yards from the fence, and then push them on again in a balanced manner, so as to gain sufficient momentum to land well into the next field.

We now come to an important point in jumping that very few people understand. I refer to the use of the lower part of the leg. Failure in this particular is the cause of much of the trouble encountered by riders when jumping. They have never been taught the *importance* of being able to use their legs for impulsion, and therefore have never learnt to do so. It is worth while digressing a little to emphasise this point. Lay minds always think of a fence as a jump, but to the horse it is an obstacle which the dictionary defines as "something in the path or way." If the horse meets something in his path or way, he will stop unless he is trained to go over it. It is a barrier to him, and it is you, rider, who call it a jump.

Out hunting we are all considerably helped by the horse's gregarious instinct, of which we take considerable advantage when training, and without which a good many people would not be able to get their horses over fences at all, for it is a moral certainty they would not be able to push or help them. This gregarious instinct will serve as long as you are content

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to be one of the 95 per cent. who spend their time hunting the person in front. The trouble will begin when you meet a big place or are in front yourself. Do not imagine that it will be all plain-sailing and that you will be able to "just sit there." (If you can, I would like both your horse and the name of the person who trained him.) Even in this case, if you cannot use the lower part of your leg, it is a thousand pities that this exceptional horse should be in your possession! The reasons for which I say this are:

- (a) Because it is only a question of time before you spoil him; and
- (b) Because he deludes you into thinking you can ride.

Further, you may eventually want to ride in Hunter Trials or Show jumping competitions, and you will certainly have to use the lower part of your leg in either case, if you are to have any hope of success. When there is no excitement and no gregarious instinct at work to help you, the incentive to jump must be supplied by the indication received from the rider. In addition, if a freegoer is to be kept at the top of his form, or an inferior performer's jumping improved, the necessity of using the lower part of the leg correctly becomes doubly essential.

Once, therefore, the pupil has learnt to sit on over jumps with *and* without reins, it is time he learnt to *ride at fences*. It must be perfectly evident to everyone that this cannot be learnt on freegoing horses, and we must have some of another sort. People do not ride sticky fencers for pleasure, but if the pupil wishes to ride seriously, part of the instruction must henceforth be on this type of horse. There is no alternative, and it is because people do not realise this that they remain on the level of mere passengers. Sticky but safe fencers are *one of the facilities necessary for teaching riding*. Pupils must now go back to the pole, not actually on the ground, but at a height of 18 inches to 2 feet, and gradually work up again on sticky horses as they did on the easier ones. It is no use pupils trying to ride sticky horses over *big fences* to commence with. They must go back to the smaller ones and concentrate on using their leg up to the moment the horse takes off. They will nearly always unintentionally stop using it two strides from the fence. This is because the first law of nature is self-preservation,

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and, as a result of trying to drive with the lower part of their legs, they have loosened their primary grip, and so they instinctively stop kicking in order to cling on again in time for the jump. The result is that the sticky jumper puts in two or three short strides. The freegoer does not do this, because he has been taught by a good rider to keep the pace up close to the fence.

IMPORTANCE OF IMAGINATION

It is one of the essentials of the scheme of teaching outlined that both instructor and pupil should have imagination. While the pupil is performing over low fences, the instructor should always bear in mind that his comments, if they are to serve any useful purpose, must be made with the object of advising pupils what to do supposing the jump to be a more formidable obstacle. For instance, the instructor could tell his pupils to imagine that there is a ditch 4 to 5 feet wide on the landing side of the pole, drawing a line in the sand to mark the width, and the pupil will make every effort to clear this imaginary obstacle. If he "gets in" no harm is done, and he can go on trying until eventually he clears it. The pole must be thought of as a target, something to practise at. If pupils will practise continually until they can ride correctly over small fences, they will be able to take on bigger places with very little difficulty.

If you are willing to go through this drudgery of riding sticky horses you will never regret it. It is the whole secret of jumping. If you possess power, you can always discriminate in the use of it, but if you have not got it, you will be helpless when power is called for.

A certain amount of training should now take place over wingless fences, but still on horses which know their job. I always tell my pupils to imagine there is barbed wire on either side of these fences. If the fence is approached too fast and the horse flies out, he is "in the wire," and the moral is to go slower and do not lose touch with his mouth. If he flies out to the left, he should be pulled round sharply to the right, and *vice versa*. This is a golden rule when dealing with refusals.

We are now inviting beginners to make mistakes so that they may

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profit by them. We are creating difficulties for them, not glossing them over, for we are trying to teach riding, not merely sitting on.

The wingless fences should not be more than 3 feet 6 inches high at most. All rails should be nailed up, for it is dangerous to allow horses to become careless over timber, a thing which frequently happens if rails are left loose.

If readers will refer to the chapter dealing with the training of the young horse, they will find there details of a jump, or series of jumps, which we call "the grid." This jump, in addition to being of great value in training the young horse, is equally valuable for the training of the young rider, and the procedure recommended for the training of either is the same.

If I may record a personal note concerned with teaching, I might say that I have felt somewhat of a fool when friends, especially riding friends, of my students come here to watch a lesson while jumping (and particularly indoor jumping) is going on. When these horsey friends see someone who was considered good enough to come here for "advanced riding" going over and over a pole about 3 feet high, especially if there are some real beginners performing the same feat at the same time, their looks and mannerisms betray the thoughts: "Is this all that is going to be jumped? Aren't they going to jump anything higher?" and so on. In the privacy of the room in which they subsequently foregather for tea, I am certain that much advice is given (free, gratis and for nothing) far superior to anything that I may have said. If accepted, I guarantee it will retard my pupils' progress more effectively than any other hindrance that I can think of.

So I would like to offer a word of explanation to these riding, advice-giving friends. In a school it is possible for beginners and advanced riders to be apparently practising the same thing, but not actually doing so. The beginners are learning to sit on over a fence and are riding horses which are practically automatic machines, whilst the more advanced pupils are learning to sit on over a fence but are riding either sticky or impetuous horses. To learn active riding a pupil must ride horses which he would not ride from choice, and try to approach the fence correctly on them. At first, of course, he will fail, so it would be useless for him to try and take on



Plate XV.

Clearing a wingless gate 4 ft. 6 ins. high



Examples of presenting a horse accurately Left-hand rider jumps
narrow stile Right-hand rider uses post for guidance over wire

the big fences on difficult horses at once. He must practise over small ones, and this is what advanced pupils are doing when visited by their friends. The size of the jump allows riders of both sorts to have plenty of practice without tiring the horses. That they get a bit bored is only due to the riders' inefficiency.

It sometimes happens that a pupil who is going through the sticky horse stage will express a wish to ride one of my really good jumpers. I always explain that I could not possibly permit it, because that particular horse—and one is generally indicated—is kept for show jumping, and is therefore always kept up to concert pitch. If I were to allow a student to ride it before he had learnt to ride at a fence, he would ride it badly, and in no time the horse would cease to be the jumper he is. The pupil might be as brave as a lion and have the best intentions, but he would, knowing no better, present the horse at the fence in a way that would be most disconcerting for it. The horse would probably be unbalanced and the rider would not be able to maintain impulsion. The remedy lies in the pole. Let none labour under any delusion. If the rider is wrong over the pole he will be wrong over more serious fences, and if he takes the latter on for practising reasons he is unfair to the horse he rides.

I should like to conclude this chapter on jumping with advice to those who desire to hunt. Bad riding is the cause of much trouble and many accidents in the hunting-field. In my opinion, it is a false doctrine to preach, as many people do, that the place to learn riding is in the hunting-field. The place to learn is in a school; education is *continued* out hunting, which enables you later on to go hunting for pleasure alone. If this procedure were adopted there would be fewer people who are a nuisance out hunting, fewer falls and accidents, and less damage to fences.

✧ CHAPTER FOUR ✧

✧===== ASTRIDE *v.* SIDE-SADDLE =====✧

BEFORE endeavouring to place before the reader the arguments for and against each of these methods, I should like to make it perfectly clear that, in entering into this discussion, I consider we must entirely ignore the question of sex. Granted that certain fundamentals are necessary for successful astride riding, these must remain the same for women as for men; again, if men rode side-saddle, the laws governing that form of riding would apply to them as well as to women.

There are still people who, blind to what is before their eyes, will advance as an argument against women riding astride that no woman has the strength to produce the grip necessary when jumping or in moments of emergency. Ladies who ride astride regularly and successfully in the hunting-field or show-ring are dubbed exceptions. Any woman of normal physique, who will give the time and take the trouble, can develop as independent a seat as the average man. The delicate question whether a lady's legs are suitable for astride work, or the fact that they are different in shape from those of a man, must be discussed (to say the least of it) rather tactfully. I do not imagine that in these days there is a great deal of difference, but if there is, I am inclined to think that the advantage in shape (if such an advantage exists) is on the side of the ladies. If, however, we are to decide an argument such as this on the shape of legs, we might as well maintain that only a horse with a "hind-leg" that wins the Hunter Championship at Olympia has any chance of becoming a star performer in the field.

I think we all like to see a woman well turned out and riding side-saddle, but that point does not arise here. If I may express my own views, I can honestly say that I would much rather teach ladies to ride astride than their brothers.



Plate XVII.

A very common sight—the rider's leg drawn too far back



Plate XVIII.

Not so common, but leg too far forward



Plate XIX.

A perfect side-saddle seat over a fence. Note delicate handling of the

ASTRIDE v. SIDE - SADDLE

Riding is a combination of balance and grip ; without one the other is useless. In the case of the side-saddle, the pommels are so situated that a beginner can learn in a few lessons to use them as a *means of security*. This artificial device on the side-saddle automatically gives, even to the novice, a secure seat—that first essential to good riding. When, however, the pommels are used as a means of security only, and the manner of using them is given insufficient attention, considerable difficulty will be found later in rectifying the faults which accrue through the adoption of an incorrect position, due to the frantic clutching of the pommels in order to remain “in the plate.”

Astride, however, a beginner at the same stage of training would, possibly, actually fall off if anything untoward happened, because the astride-saddle has no artificial device for the rider to cling to. The grip which is essential to good astride riding takes some little time to acquire, and it is necessary to develop the riding muscles gradually. During this period the astride rider is actually insecure compared with the beginner in the side-saddle. This handicap is at once used as an argument against ladies riding astride. That the astride BEGINNER falls off in the same circumstances as those when the side-saddle BEGINNER remains on, but only by frantically gripping the pommels, is used as an argument to prove that the side-saddle is the safer method of riding. I do not agree.

I think that the only real difficulty which faces the average woman who wishes to ride astride is that the majority cannot afford or do not give the time necessary for developing an independent seat. Many may go abroad for a portion of the year, are in London for another portion, and in Scotland for a third, so that too little time is left to give to the serious practice *necessary* before they can hope to ride really well astride. Should any lady, however, be able to give the necessary time, I am sure that the chances of being able to ride astride are equal to those of a man starting at the same time. It is advisable to devote a month or two to continuous instruction in the elementary stages, in order that the riding muscles may be developed gradually and on sound lines. This should be carried out under the supervision of a really good instructor. Hacking and riding about the country-

ASTRIDE *v.* SIDE-SADDLE

side is of little value, whilst the lax way in which this is usually done is the cause of so many girls being inefficient, and in consequence bringing astride riding into ill repute.

I should like to emphasise one point in particular. It is much more advantageous if lessons in riding are continuous. I mean that one or two lessons a week, spread over say three months, are not of the same value as the same number of lessons compressed into a period of three weeks. Riders will not develop their muscles to the same extent in the drawn-out lessons as they would if the lessons were continuous. In consequence they minimise the chances of obtaining an independent seat.

If, however, an instructor is not available, certain movements defined in another chapter should be carried out over and over again in a riding school elsewhere. I have endeavoured to explain the aids which should be used to induce the horse to comply with the wishes of the rider—*i.e.*, carry out these movements correctly. If these movements were carried out daily by would-be astride riders, without undue effort the security of their seat would improve surprisingly quickly compared with that of the rider who merely hacks about for the same period.

Now let me turn to the side-saddle rider's point of view. The principal arguments I hear against this particular form of riding are that:

- (a) It often gives horses sore backs.
- (b) Owing to having both legs on one side, the rider does not have the same control over her horse, particularly in the case of a horse trying to refuse and "cutting it" when jumping.

I regret to say that, even after allowing for exaggeration, there is a certain amount of truth in (a). Side-saddles do cause more injuries to horses' backs than astride-saddles, so let us look for the causes and try to supply remedies. First, there is the saddle which does not fit the horse, a much more frequent cause of sore backs than it ought to be. The remedy is obvious. Either the stuffing must be altered or a different saddle used. Secondly, there is the saddle which does not fit the rider, and this is often the case when riders do not possess their own saddles. Here, again, the remedy is self-evident. Thirdly, there is the tired rider who lolls about



Plate XX.

The 'sore-back seat' which is responsible for much unfair criticism of the side-saddle



Plate XXI.

Correct seat, side-saddle

in the saddle during long hacks returning from hunting, a cause of sore backs which is frequently overlooked and very difficult to remedy. I often wish ladies who have been riding side-saddle all day would "put a leg over" more frequently when returning from hunting. It would help many horses on these long return journeys, whilst the change in position would be a boon to the tired rider, especially if there were a stirrup adjustment on the off side. The last cause of sore backs is bad riding. Beginners frequently contribute to this through abusing the quickly gained security given by the pommels. In other words, they try to find a short-cut in the early days of riding. If this occurs under the supervision of an instructor, he is directly to blame; in fact, instructors frequently are to blame for this, due to the efforts to prove how quickly they can teach a lady to ride. They disregard the principle that it is not the time you take, but what you can produce at the end, which is what matters and deserves congratulation.

I have not differentiated between the sexes in my remarks about teaching riding, so it is not necessary to give the ladies any special instruction here, except possibly to advise them not to be over-anxious to make progress too quickly. This is the most frequent cause of strained riding muscles.

For the first few days in the early side-saddle lessons there is no doubt that the pace should be a walk. During these early lessons beginners should devote practically the whole of their time to preventing themselves from slipping forward into the pommels. The seat of the saddle is the place to sit on, not in the pommels. This very elementary period must be used for ensuring that the pupil sits correctly. Modern side-saddles have considerable advantages over the old-fashioned sort. The right knee is not raised so high, the upper part of the leg being horizontal, and the lower pommel is much farther away from the upper one, allowing the rider to use a much longer stirrup. Occasionally one sees this long stirrup exaggerated. If used by a really good horsewoman *it looks extremely attractive in the show-ring*. In the same way many men use an exaggerated long leather when showing their horses. It is not suitable, however, for general utility, so we must rule it out for the beginner. She should have her leather

adjusted so that the top of the upper part of her left leg is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches below the pommel (Plate No. XXIII), and not cramped against it (Plate No. XXII).

When the beginner habitually sits in the right part of the saddle while her horse is walking, a slow jog-trot may be attempted, but she should in no circumstances attempt to "rise." Particular attention should be devoted to ensuring that her left heel is well down and her body square to the front and slightly inclined to the off side when looked at from the front or rear (Plate No. XXI).

Elementary lessons should take place in a quiet lane on a very smooth-moving horse. The reason for this is to obviate the continued rebalancing of the rider which would be necessary every time she came to the end of the riding school, even if she were only going round without attempting any of the exercises. Once the beginner sits correctly with ease, then her training can with advantage be continued in a school. I would not, however, advise her to go round the school left-handed for some considerable time, as it might lead her to slip down on the near side.

The other objection to the side-saddle is that riders have less control than they would have astride. If this be so in some instances, it is not in others. I know many ladies who can push a horse at a fence with any man. There are others who cannot do so, but not because it is impossible. I think there are two reasons for this inability for some side-saddle riders to get hold of a horse effectively. First, as most ladies' horses are selected for their manners and capabilities, the large majority of ladies unwittingly adopt the role of passengers (some, in fact, do not wish to be anything else). Secondly, few have the facilities to obtain the necessary amount of practice. In deciding that practice is essential and facilities necessary, we re-emphasise the cardinal need of TIME. It may be of interest to those of my readers who have seen my daughter ride, to learn that it was over a month before she attempted to trot when learning side-saddle. I have dealt with facilities in Chapter 5, and I have divided Riding into two phases—Passive and Active. When once a lady has become a good passive rider (side-saddle), her subsequent training in active riding should be carried



Plate XXII.

Old-fashioned seat in old-fashioned saddle



Plate XXIII.

Modern seat in modern saddle

out as I have advocated, but she must use her whip or cane in place of the leg on the right or off side. In advocating this procedure, I fully realise that there is a danger of loss of communication between the rider's hands and the horse's mouth. This, however, is largely a question of practice in manipulation. After all, men riding astride frequently use their canes. We are assuming that when this part of her training is taking place, the lady is a good passive rider, so that her seat is as secure as a man's and probably more so. I should like to emphasise once again that riding is really the same for both sexes, thus any instruction given in this book should be taken literally by side-saddle riders, who should merely substitute the word "cane" for "right leg." The following personal anecdote might interest and perhaps help to convince doubtful readers. In 1910 a young horse I was riding near Niddrie (Edinburgh) bolted through being frightened by a train passing over a bridge. After going for some little distance at top speed, we collided with a hay-cart, which smashed my right leg to pieces. We still continued at top speed until we reached Portobello, some two or three miles away. My leg was so severely broken that, though (thanks to a clever doctor) it did not have to be amputated, it has never been the slightest use to me since, except to place against a horse's side during training immediately the signal has been given with my cane. This being the case, I maintain that there is little difference between a side-saddle rider and myself. All my principal successes have taken place since the accident referred to !

It must not for a moment be thought that I am advising ladies as to which way they should ride, as I think they can be equally safe either way—if they will but take the necessary time to learn properly. No one can learn to ride quickly either way. There is no royal road to efficiency whether you ride side-saddle or astride. I can never understand why riding, with all its vagaries, is taken so lightly. It is admitted that it takes years to make an efficient architect, fishmonger, actor, or even politician, yet most people expect to be able to ride well after a few lessons.

Before concluding this chapter I want to make one more point clear. I have frequently seen notices in various newspapers saying that ladies are debarred from riding astride at the International or Richmond Horse

✦———— ASTRIDE *v.* SIDE-SADDLE

Shows, or on similar occasions. This is not the case. The authorities at these shows merely reserve a few classes “to be ridden by ladies side-saddle.” Why should they not? These classes are always most attractive—to *onlookers* at least. They have never prevented any lady from entering her horse in any other class and riding it herself.

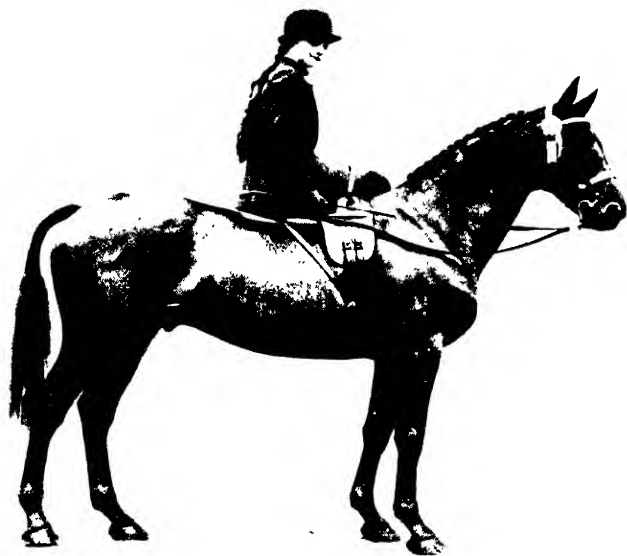


Plate XXIV.

*Sir Archibald Weigall's 'Radiant,' ridden
by Miss Jackie Hance Championship,
Royal Show, Warwick, 1931*



Plate XXV.

A correct seat, side-saddle



Plate XXVI.

Another good jump, but the style of the left-hand rider is perhaps more suitable at Olympia

❖❖ CHAPTER FIVE ❖❖

❖❖===== THE TEACHING OF RIDING =====❖❖

BEFORE entering into a discussion on the teaching of riding, it is perhaps advisable to say that there are, undeniably, not a great number of establishments in this country where beginners can absolutely rely on getting first-class instruction from the start. The reasons for this shortage are not far to seek.

First, owing to severe overhead charges it is extremely difficult to make money solely by teaching riding. I do not mean that by combining teaching with various sidelines an instructor cannot actually obtain a modest living, but that he cannot expect to make very much more. This being the case, the type of person of either sex one would like to see conducting Equitation Schools does not often attempt to do so. On the other hand, unfortunately, there is nothing to prevent anyone so inclined from purchasing a site, erecting or renting stables, and designating himself (or herself) Riding Master (or Mistress). It is gratifying, however, to see that the Institute of the Horse has recently recognised this fact, and has therefore arranged to carry out periodical examinations of Riding Schools, and to issue graded certificates according to the capabilities of the various instructors. I only hope they will demand a high standard before issuing, at any rate, their first-class certificate.

Riding is one thing, teaching riding is quite another; nevertheless, no one can teach riding successfully unless they are themselves good horsemen or horsewomen, for in all good instruction, explanation must be followed by demonstration. By "a good horseman," I mean one who is able to ride horses of various types, who can train a young horse or improve one which has been indifferently trained, and who is ready at any time to get on a pupil's horse to show him any mistake he may have been making,

✦══════ THE TEACHING OF RIDING ══════✦

and to demonstrate how to rectify it. An instructor in this country should also have had a certain amount of experience in the hunting-field—the more the better. All instructors should also have a thorough knowledge of the theoretical side of riding, and the ability to impart both their theoretical and practical knowledge to their pupils. If anyone not possessing such qualifications tries to teach riding, he is courting failure. Moreover, no one ought to have the effrontery to attempt to teach others when they are themselves unqualified.

EARLY STAGES

In teaching riding, too much stress cannot be laid on the importance of a good beginning. From the earliest stages pupils should have the utmost confidence in their instructors, their horses, and their surroundings, and it is the instructor's job to inspire them with this confidence. It will at once be apparent that experience and knowledge of human nature is one of the first essentials for a riding instructor.

As individual pupils differ, it would be foolish to lay down hard-and-fast rules for dealing with them *en masse*. If, however, I were asked to what rule of teaching I considered that instructors should attach the most importance, I should certainly say: "Try to finish every lesson with a success." It is the instructor's business to know when a pupil has given of his or her best. When the moment of triumph arrives he should be prepared to stop the lesson at once, even though the usual hour and a half is not over. I have always found that the moral effects of success or failure show themselves to a marked degree in subsequent lessons.

The usual form of a course of riding instruction in this country is a series of ten or twelve lessons lasting an hour or an hour and a half each. The amount some people imagine can be learnt in that time is amazing. If anyone wishes to excel at golf, tennis, or cricket, he realises that it is necessary to devote an enormous amount of time to the study and practice of the game selected. Not so with riding. I know from experience that many people think that they ought to be ready to go hunting after about ten lessons !

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Instructors must be frank with their pupils on this point. None can become finished riders without years of study and practice on their own account. This does not mean that a pupil may not arrive at a point where he can both enjoy and improve himself after two or three months' continuous instruction, but he cannot reach the top of the tree in that time. A course of ten or twelve lessons and then nothing more is practically useless. Any instructor who affirms to the contrary is either himself ignorant of what constitutes good riding, or else is deliberately "flat-catching."

Young instructors must remember that explanations and demonstrations are of no avail unless followed by assiduous practice on the part of the pupil. Let them not be tempted, therefore, to spend too much time in talking and showing "how it is done."

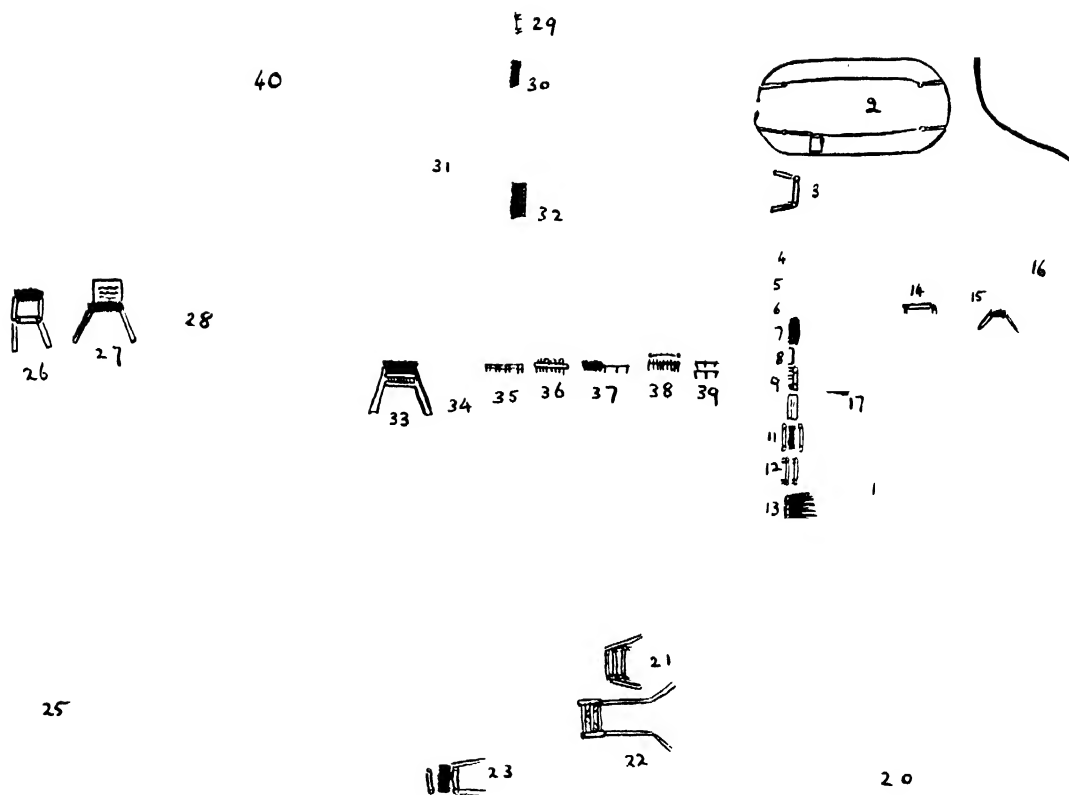
FACILITIES

However well an instructor may ride, and however much he may know about riding, he cannot teach successfully unless he has special facilities for doing so, even if he is only dealing with beginners. It is the lack of these necessary facilities which causes many good riders to fail when they attempt to instruct others. In this section I will state what facilities I consider essential if pupils are to be taught to ride effectually and in safety.

First, I do not think riding can be taught with real success except in a school. This need not be a building with a roof, but it must be an area of not more than 60 by 20 yards enclosed by something—a wall, hurdles, or even a rope. At the same time, a school surrounded by a high wall has this advantage, that there is nothing to distract the attention of horse or rider. In the English climate, without a roof, it is impossible to be sure of getting continuous instruction, and pupils, human or equine, may be deprived for days together of their opportunity of training. In a severe winter a month or more may pass with the school under snow, and "horses to the straw-ring, riders to the cinema" becomes the order of the day.

Further reasons why an enclosed school is essential are as follows: A knowledge of the aids or signals by which a horse is moved about is always necessary if any horse is to understand what is required of him.

THE TEACHING OF RIDING



No. 1.—KEY TO SKETCH OF THE SCHOOL

1. Closed-in school, 35 yds. by 15 yds.
2. Jumping lane, 55 yds. long by 20 yds. at widest point. Lane either side 12 ft. wide with gates at each corner. Bank with a ditch either side of it is a fixture.
3. Adjustable post and rails, but other jumps could be erected in lieu of this form of jump.
4. Plain post and rails, fixed, 3 ft. 3 ins.
5. Brush fence, 5 ft. high.
6. Stile, 3 ft. 9 ins.
7. Strong stake and binder.
8. Very low post and rails, about 1 ft. 6 ins., used for schooling horses in the very elementary stages.
9. Fixed post and rails, 4 ft. 2 ins. high.
10. Plain ditch, 9 ft. wide, 10 ft. long.

Double oxer. Brush fence, 4 ft. 6 ins. high. Post and rails, 2 ft. 6 ins. high on either side, each rail being 4 ft. from the fence.

Fixed double post and rails. Each rail is 3 ft. 9 ins. high, and they are 4 ft. 6 ins. apart.

Bullfinch, about 7 ft. high. It is necessary to jump about 4 ft. high to negotiate this safely.

Small post and rails, about 2 ft. 9 ins. high.

Brush fence, about 2 ft. 8 ins. high.

The grid. Movable post and rails about 2 ft. 6 ins. high, all about 9 ft. apart. These rails can be removed and placed at varying intervals as required.

Brush fence, about 4 ft. 6 ins. high, 10 ft. long.

Small double post and rails about the same height as 14, rails about 3 ft. apart.

If anyone who does not understand the use of these signals is placed on his back, anything may happen to horse or rider; therefore the only place in which a beginner is safe, before he has learnt to "start, steer, or stop" his horse, is inside a school. Again, riding in a school ensures that everyone has an objective at every moment instead of riding aimlessly about.

In addition to this indoor school, an outdoor school is necessary. I will describe such a school as I visualise it. It is a field about 140 by 120 yards (three acres). In one corner is the indoor school and about 10 yards away from, and lying parallel to it, is the loose jumping lane, arranged so as to take up as little room as possible. In the field there are about thirty jumps of every conceivable kind—stakes and binders, stiff brush fences, stiles and timber (all tightly nailed up), iron railings (spiked as well as plain, if you feel like it), a cement wall, a bullfinch, an open ditch, and anything else you can think of.

In addition to the serious fences, we must naturally have a few small ones for beginners to practise over, and in all probability we shall want some show-jumps; but these are not fixtures, and can be placed where we want them at any time. All the fences are used winter and summer, wet or fine. All are without wings except the big show-jumps and the fences

19. Small post and rails, about 3 ft. high.
20. Very strong birch fence, 5 ft. 3 ins. high, with post and rails 5 ft. high on landing side, and 4 ft. from fence.
21. Adjustable (up to 5 ft. 9 ins.) triple bar. Rails 3 ft. apart.
22. Adjustable (up to 5 ft. 9 ins.) gate. This jump is also arranged so that a second gate can be erected at a distance of 24 ft. to form the level-crossing jump.
23. An adjustable double oxer such as shown in this book. The rails can be raised any height and placed any distance from the fence, which is 4 ft. 6 ins. high.
24. Wall, on which ordinary railway sleepers are placed as required. Is frequently used at 5 ft. 4 ins.
25. Small adjustable post and rails used for teaching beginners.
26. In-and-out jump. Adjustable post and rails (first) with brush fence, 20 ft. apart.
27. Water jump. Brush fence, 2 ft. 6 ins. high, water 12 ft. wide. Fence can be moved back to give broader jump still.
28. Plain fixed post and rails, 3 ft. 6 ins. high.
29. Brush fence, 3 ft. 6 ins. high and 5 ft. long. A wire fence, 4 ft. 6 ins., is placed on one side, but is not to be jumped.
30. Plain brush fence, 4 ft. high, 10 ft. long.
31. Adjustable stile, 4 ft. long.
32. Plain brush fence, 4 ft. 6 ins. high and 10 ft. long.
33. Open ditch. Ditch, 6 ft. wide and 10 ft. long. Movable fence, 4 ft. 9 ins. high and 12 ft. long. The additional length of the fence enables the trainer to commence with a very narrow ditch towards him and gradually increase the width as training progresses.
34. Low wall surmounted by adjustable post and rails.
35. Plain wire, 3 ft. 3 ins. high.
36. Chestnut palings, 3 ft. high.
37. Brush fence, 3 ft. 6 ins. high, and is joined on one side by iron railings, 3 ft. 6 ins. high.
38. Very pointed spiked railings, 3 ft. 8 ins. high, with fixed barbed wire same height, 4 ft. 6 ins. on the landing side.
39. Double iron railings, 3 ft. 6 ins. high and 4 ft. apart.
40. Wire with stile in centre, 3 ft. 6 ins. high.

NOTE.—It should be noted that, except in the case of the show-jumps and the low elementary jumps for beginners, all fences are without wings. All post and rails, iron and spiked railings are fixtures and cannot be knocked down.

★===== THE TEACHING OF RIDING =====★

intended for beginners. I consider this a very important point, and I have gone into the matter more thoroughly elsewhere in this book. The inexperienced may find some difficulty in placing such a large number of fences so as to leave a clear space on either side of each jump and yet have plenty of room for ordinary riding. The accompanying sketch and key shows how, at the time of writing, my own school is arranged.

H O R S E S

I am going to put HORSES among the "facilities" required for teaching, because they should be specially and carefully chosen for this purpose. Some should be of the ordinary freegoing type, some of a more excitable nature, and others of a sluggish disposition. All should be made perfectly safe over the school fences by the instructor before any pupil is allowed to ride them. Sluggish horses are very necessary, as they give pupils a chance to learn to use the lower part of their legs effectively—one of the essentials of good riding. Pupils may never get this opportunity except in a school, as no one rides for choice horses of this description. The more excitable animals provide the necessary contrast, and will make pupils realise that all horses are not like the placid creatures on which they began their riding. The school gives pupils the opportunity of riding in safety a type of horse which they would not be capable of controlling in the open. It is extremely unwise constantly to give inexperienced riders the impression that all is well. Far from being glossed over, difficulties should from time to time be created, and pupils instructed how to deal with them. If this were done more frequently and thoroughly, many accidents outside would be prevented.

Although I strongly advocate the use of a school in the early stages, I should like to emphasise the point that a school, whether of riding, economics, or engineering, is only a means to an end. The object of a riding school is to enable pupils to study undisturbed and in safety the various phases of riding. It is obviously impossible to complete anyone's education in a school, and once beginners have gained confidence and learnt to control their horses, a certain amount of training *must* take place in the open.

PROGRAMME

It is vitally important to successful teaching that the instructor should have a pre-arranged progressive programme for each pupil, both for the whole course of instruction and for each individual lesson. Something new, even if apparently trivial, should be taught every day, and every endeavour should be used to avoid monotony. Training must be carried out with due consideration for the pupil's physical condition; if this point is not observed, riding muscles will be strained and progress prevented for the time being.

With regard to the division of the individual lesson, I suggest that, supposing the lesson to last one hour, it should be arranged as follows: During the first ten minutes care should be taken that the stirrup-leathers are correctly fitted. If they are not the right length the lesson will be entirely wasted. Attention should also be paid to the rider's position in the saddle. The latter point is most important, and failure to give it the necessary attention during the elementary period will increase the pupil's difficulties later on. In any case riders should look the part from the beginning; so let each lesson start with a few minutes on deportment.

The next twenty minutes may be employed in carrying out the various school exercises recommended later in this chapter, and then, at the end of the first half-hour, pupils and horses can rest for a few minutes. Because such rest is advised, I do not mean that these minutes should be wasted by either instructor or pupil. Advantage should be taken of this lull in the proceedings to explain to the pupil the fitting of some of the saddlery, or the construction of some part of the horse's anatomy, or to try to make clearer some technical point which has appeared to mystify him during the practical work. Nothing is more annoying than to see instructors wasting this period when it can be so profitably employed. Immediately after the few minutes' rest is an excellent time to carry on work without stirrups, according to the stage of training the pupils have reached. If they are still in the elementary stage the "dummy" horse exercises can be carried out, while the horses are standing still; but if they are further advanced, a certain amount of walking and trotting without stirrups

★———— THE TEACHING OF RIDING ————★

should take place in addition to these exercises. This will occupy any time up to ten minutes, and the last quarter of an hour or ten minutes can be devoted to jumping.

I have acted on the above system for the last fifteen years, and I know from experience what excellent results it has given, not only in my own case, but in that of my various assistant instructors.

SCHOOL EXERCISES

Before giving details of certain exercises which can be practised in a riding school either by individuals or by several riders together, I should like to refute an erroneous impression which exists in the minds of many people that there is still a form of riding called "Military Riding." Such is not the case, and has not been the case for some considerable time. Some few years ago there was in existence in the Army a type of instructor who, apart from passing riding tests, had also been awarded on his instructor's certificate a "V.G.," or "G.," or "Fair," for "Voice and Style." This meant several things, but, if I remember correctly, a loud voice was the main essential! Of later years, however, this form of instructor has, I am pleased to say, been ruled out of order. Army instructors are now taught to make their instructions clear in an ordinary voice.

In dealing, however, with twelve or more pupils in an enclosed school—whether in the Army or in private life—it is necessary from time to time to give executive instructions which, I suppose, must be called "Words of Command." During the time in which various turns, circles, and figures-of-eight are being carried out in accordance with these "Words of Command," the instructor must tell faulty riders, or even slackers, to "get up" or "hold back" into line, etc. Because of the insistence on precision, it is assumed by many people that the pupils who are riding are being drilled. In a sense they are, but the instructor in the riding school has a different objective from the instructor in a barrack square. In the school he wishes a certain formation to be retained so as to give the rider the necessary practice in pushing a horse up, or restraining him as the case may be, and generally applying the aids as they are called for, to rectify any error into which he may fall from time to time. The continuous

THE TEACHING OF RIDING

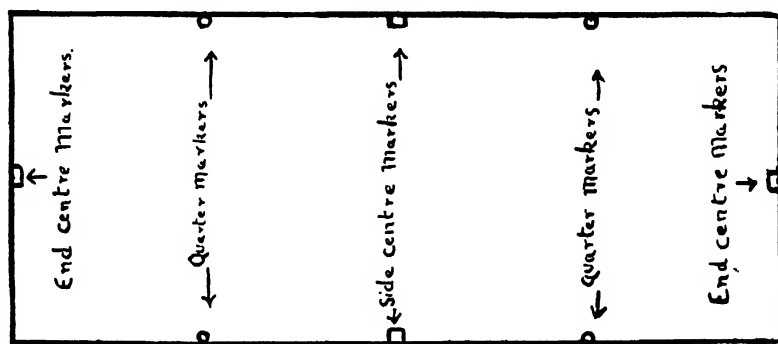
efforts (such as circling or turning in conjunction with one another), ultimately give results to both instructor and pupils. I find the same exercises carried out by people in private life give still better results than those obtained in the Army, as the average civilian rider endeavours to carry out instructions with much more energy and care than the average soldier.

Generally speaking, the following exercises should be carried out at a trot or walk; when once pupils can rise in their stirrups, a trot is the pace really recommended. Whether walking or trotting, however, it should be carefully noticed that a measured pace should be insisted on, but not a lethargic crawl or "jog" round the school.

In case some of my readers do not understand exactly what I mean by the word *turn*, I should explain that riders must turn at right angles to the direction in which they are travelling, neither more nor less. The turn should be made from a particular spot on the one side of the school, and care taken to ride to a point on the other side of the school exactly opposite. There is a natural tendency for horses to incline in the direction in which they turn; this must be checked by applying the correct aids.

When *circling* we stipulate, principally for the sake of giving a particular objective to the rider, that circles should be half the width of the school. (The centre of the school should be marked in some distinctive way.)

In order to *change the rein*, or, to be more precise, to change the direction in which the rider is travelling, it is a good idea to ride obliquely from one quarter-marker to the other. The "quarter-markers" are spots marked on



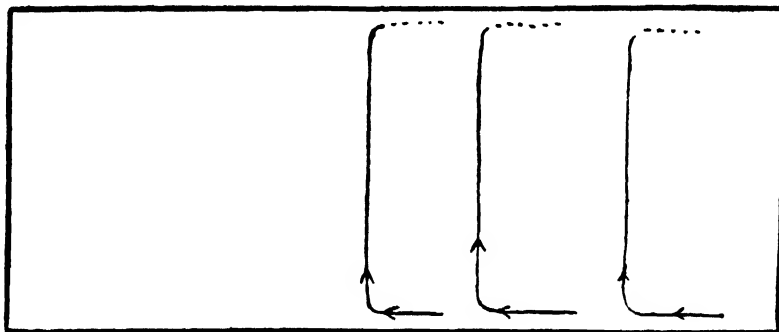
No. 2.—THE SCHOOL, SHOWING "QUARTER-MARKERS"

each side of the school—a quarter of the length measured from each end. Sketch No. 2 shows the school and markers. When several pupils are riding, care should be taken that each one goes right up to the marker in turn.

If these exercises are being done “solo,” the rider must make up his mind some seconds before actually turning or circling what spot he is going to turn or circle from, and he must then make the circle or turn with great care as to the direction and application of the aids. It is possible that there may be more than one person riding without an instructor, in which case it should be arranged for one of them to give the executive instructions when an exercise is to begin. The following remark is highly important: a great deal of trouble should be taken to give some idea to the other rider, or riders, when an executive instruction is going to be given, in order to avoid “jobbing” the horse on the mouth unnecessarily. It was the aim of old-fashioned instructors to “catch people napping” by giving sudden and unexpected commands—unfortunately the horses’ mouths suffered—not the pupils.

EXERCISES

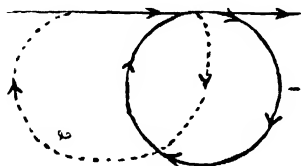
Turning right or left at any part of the school, care being taken that the track of the new direction should be *parallel* to the *end* of the school if the movement is from the side, and parallel to the side if made from the end (Sketch No. 3).



No. 3.—THE TRACK FOR TURNING TO THE RIGHT

THE TEACHING OF RIDING

Circling can be done in several ways. First a complete circle should be made with a diameter *half the width of the school*, care being taken that when the exercise is begun the rider "goes forward" to start the circle



No. 4.—THE TRACK FOR THE CIRCLE

and does not snatch at his horse, thereby checking the pace and making the circle, as it were, behind him (Sketch No. 4). Another form of circle (here the expression is really a misnomer, but it suffices) is made thus: a half-circle is first made from side to centre, but before returning to the side the horse, or horses, should be taken straight down the centre of the school (marked by the marker) for some few yards, and then another half-circle back to the side of the school. If this latter exercise is being



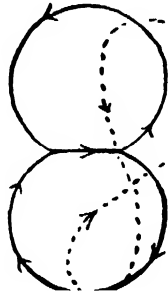
No. 5.—ANOTHER FORM OF "CIRCLE"

carried out by more than one person, it should be arranged for one of them to give the signal (either verbally or otherwise) when to leave the side and when the centre (Sketch No. 5).

THE TEACHING OF RIDING

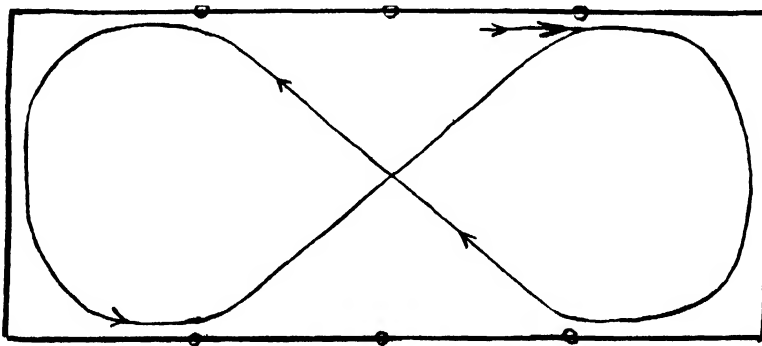


Figures of Eight can be made in various ways, but I think the important point to bear in mind, in order to ensure accuracy, is that the figure should be made so that a line drawn through it would be parallel to the end of the school (Sketch No. 6), and not as shown in dotted line in



No. 6.—A TRACK FOR FIGURES OF EIGHT

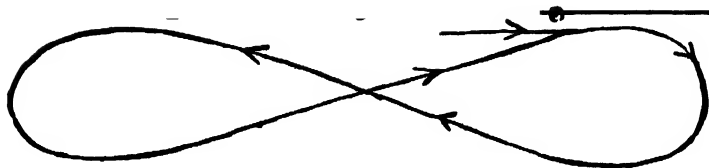
same sketch. Probably it would be better to make the first attempt by using the whole school, and going from quarter-marker to quarter-marker (Sketch No. 7), as this support from the side-ends of the school will be available practically all the time.



No. 7.—FIGURE OF EIGHT, USING THE "QUARTER-MARKERS"

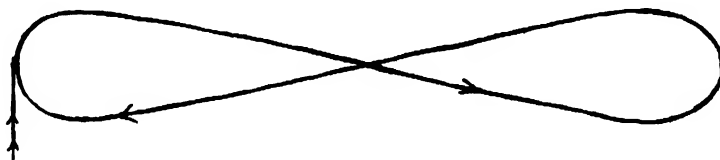
Another form of figure eight is as Sketch No. 8, in which the rider uses the whole length of the school and is supported by the wall at both ends, but on one side only this time. Riders must decide for themselves *the width* of this figure, and adhere to it. Another form is as in Sketch No. 9,

THE TEACHING OF RIDING



No. 8.—ANOTHER FORM OF FIGURE OF EIGHT

in which case the rider has little help from the extremities of the school except momentarily; this figure is extremely difficult to carry out accurately, particularly at a canter. It is frequently asked with regard to any exercises carried out at a canter: "When should the leading leg be changed?" The answer is, at the moment when the new direction is begun.



No. 9.—A DIFFICULT FIGURE OF EIGHT

Changing the Leader If more than one person is in the school, it is advisable occasionally to change the leader, which can be done with advantage in the form of an exercise. When it is decided that the second rider shall become the lead, the leader makes a circle, which varies in size according to the number composing the ride, so that he or she tails in the rear, without either increasing or decreasing his or her pace. This emphasises the importance of measured movement.

★══════ THE TEACHING OF RIDING ══════★

Cantering The leader may also be changed, assuming the pace to be a trot or a walk, by each pupil in turn cantering round the school until they reach the rear of the ride. If there are only a few in the ride, this exercise can be made additionally interesting if the one who is doing it executes a circle of the most convenient size at the most convenient point in the school, without colliding with the ride, before falling in behind the others. Great care should be taken that at no moment should the pace vary. There is a natural tendency for the horse to try to rejoin the others when the circle is begun, and to drop back into a trot at the same time. These efforts on the horse's part must be frustrated by the rider using his legs or reins, or both, as the case may be. It is the effort thus called for on the part of the rider which gives him the necessary practice for which the exercise was invented.

To Passage means to move sideways to the right or left; or else sideways and forwards at the same time, this latter movement being called the half-passage. To carry out either movement the horse should be placed as follows: The body and neck must be straight, with the shoulders slightly advanced in the direction he is to travel. The head should be bent from the poll in the same direction, so that the rider can just see the eye and check. A direct as well as lateral flexion should be obtained.

Reining Back This is a most important exercise which should not be carried out simply by pulling at the reins. A great deal of care must be taken to ensure that the horse reins back collectedly, and does not run back out of hand or deviate from a straight line.

Either of these movements is an evasion on the horse's part, and if allowed to pass unchecked will be a source of trouble in the future. The best way for beginners to do this exercise is for them to decide that each of their horses' legs shall move two paces only to the rear. If more or less strides are taken the rider must make the necessary adjustment with the hands or legs as the case may be.

Important points to be observed when doing these exercises are:

(1) That they must be carried out with the greatest possible precision.

(2) That the horse must be kept balanced throughout.

✧===== THE TEACHING OF RIDING =====✧

To Walk Close both legs and relax the necessary tension on the reins. As soon as the desired pace is reached the requisite tension on the reins should be resumed.

To Trot As above, with the necessary variations for pace.

To Canter (Off fore leading.) Sit down in the saddle, close both legs and feel both reins to collect the horse, and then feel the left rein and close the left leg the stronger.

Turns To turn to the right, the body should be leaned backwards and slightly to the right, the left leg used behind the girth and the right rein used the stronger. In using the lower part of the leg for lateral or direct impulsion, care should be taken that the angle formed by the foot with the lower part of the leg should remain unaltered. It should be specially noted that if the weight of the body is distributed correctly—*i.e.*, backwards in the direction the horse is travelling—it is practically an impossibility to rise in the saddle, therefore during the time the turn is in progress riders should at all times sit down in the saddle.

Passaging (To the right.) The right rein bends (laterally and directly) and leads the horse in the required direction; the left rein balances and assists the power of the right. The left leg makes the horse move sideways to the right, and the right leg keeps him up to the hand.

Half-Passage As above, with the necessary alterations to the tension on the reins and the use of the legs. Note: The difference between the full and the half passage is that in the case of the full the horse goes sideways only, whereas in the case of the half-passage the horse goes sideways and forwards at the same time.

Position in the Saddle Riders should sit down in the lowest part of their saddle with their knee raised in front of them to the required height, and the stirrups should then be adjusted with due consideration to the length of the leg of the rider. The body should be erect (without the back being hollowed), the upper part of the arms hanging straight down from the shoulder, the lower part being nearly horizontal; the wrists should be rounded (*i.e.*, with the backs of the hands to the front) and slightly downwards; the thumbs pointing horizontally across the body, the flat of the

— THE TEACHING OF RIDING

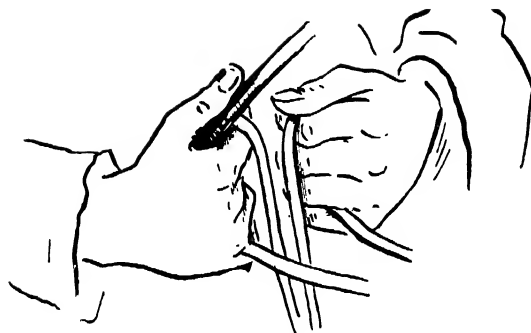
nails being partially upwards. The reason for this position is to enable the wrist to act as a spring, which would be impossible if the back of the hands were in prolongation with the fore-arm. When the latter method is used, the riders have a dead, dull, heavy cling on the horse's mouth. It is often asked: "What constitutes good hands?" One of the best definitions I have ever heard is that the rider takes up the feeling on the reins to govern the particular horse he is riding, and never at any time exerts any more pressure on the mouth than is essential. There is a common belief that in no circumstances is it necessary to have a tight hold on a horse's mouth; such is not the case.

With a horse that has a hard mouth, as a result of indifferent riding or training, it is essential that sufficient pressure should be used to control him, but no more. Unfortunately, because pressure is essential in one case, many riders fail to distinguish between the hard-mouthed horse and the moderate or light mouthed horse, the result being that if they have been used to riding a pulling horse, in a little time they will make the light-mouthed horse hard, or, worse still, possibly turn it nappy through the abuse of the reins. Therefore, if readers, when endeavouring to find out the actual pressure necessary to ride certain horses, would try never to exceed that pressure, not only will the horse concerned benefit, but they themselves will learn to distinguish between the sensitiveness of various horses' mouths.

How to Hold the Reins

Snaffle The snaffle-rein should pass between the third and fourth fingers of each hand, the end coming up over the forefingers with the thumb closed firmly on the rein (Sketch No. 10).

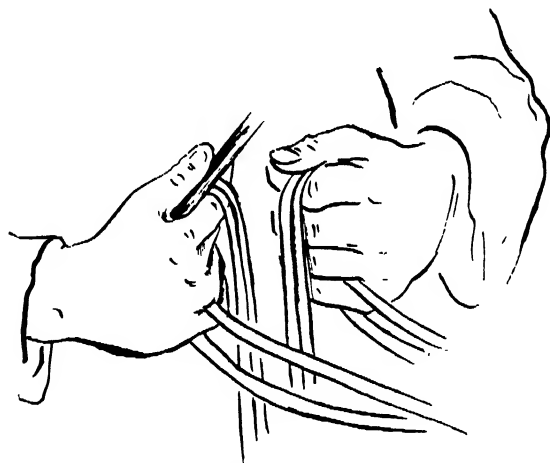
Double Bridle It does not matter whether the curb-rein is inside or out so long as the rider knows which it is. The little finger of each hand should divide the two reins, which should then both come up together over the forefinger and the thumb closed firmly on top of them (Sketch No. 11). The reins should be held as long as possible within reason from the beginning, as pupils should be made to realise the importance of cultivating "good hands."



No. 10.—HOW TO HOLD THE SNAFFLE-REINS

Improving the Pupil's Physical Condition

However fit a pupil may be, he will tire very quickly during his first riding lessons, because he will be using muscles which are not ordinarily brought into play. I recommend the following mounted exercises for strengthening the riding muscles; but care should be taken not to overdo



No. 11.—HOW TO HOLD DOUBLE-BRIDLE REINS

them, as they will be found more strenuous than they appear. In the elementary stages they should be done while the horse stands still, or on a dummy horse, which can easily be made by strapping a saddle to a small barrel. If any stuffing is required, pads made of a bit of canvas and some straw are easily tacked to each side of the barrel, just under the front of the saddle flap.

THE TEACHING OF RIDING ———

Particular care must be taken in all these exercises that both legs remain immovable throughout. All should be done without stirrups, and no help should be obtained from the hands.

Exercises

Rising without Stirrups Lean the body slightly forward so that the weight is borne on the knees, raise the seat from the saddle and sit down again. This should be done five times at first, and the number increased daily until fifty can be done in comfort.

Touching the Toes Lean the body forward and to the right and left with the arm on that side extended downwards until the hand touches the toe of the boot. Then sit upright and repeat the exercise on the other side. When leaning on either side, see that the other hand is not inadvertently resting on the withers or near them. Care must be taken that neither knee is allowed to slip down, or the lower part of either leg to move to the rear. There is a particular tendency for the latter to happen. Three times at first and increase daily. This exercise can be varied by touching the right toe with the left hand and *vice versa*.

Leaning Backwards and Forwards Fold the arms by holding the right arm above the elbow with the left hand, and placing the hollow of the right hand under the left elbow. Lean the body forward from the hips, and from that position swing back until the head touches the horse's hind-quarters. Then sit upright without unfolding the arms. Five times at first and repeat daily.

Gripping and Relaxing Open the legs and relax them so that you are sitting in the lowest part of the saddle. Then grip as hard as possible by rolling the legs into position. Hold this tight grip for about thirty seconds, then relax and rest for a moment. Five times at first and increase daily.

PART TWO
SCHOOL FOR HORSE

✧ CHAPTER SIX ✧

✧ — THE MIND OF THE HORSE — ✧

MANY of those people who are fondest of horses have the vaguest, if any, idea of the way in which their minds work. Some people assume that merely because they *are* fond of horses they automatically understand them. But true knowledge can only be acquired by close observation of their actions under all conditions. And this in itself often leads to error, owing to people attributing these actions to the wrong motives. Fear and wilful resistance, for instance, may both manifest themselves in similar ways, and by the confusion of these two much damage is constantly being done by trainers.

A man otherwise competent who has trained various horses successfully may, by ignorance of some factor in a particular horse's mental make-up, irrevocably spoil a certain type of animal. If the mind of the horse were more generally understood, the result would be seen not so much in any startling improvement in the standard of our best horses as in the decrease in numbers of those soured and "nappy" creatures which are so often met with.

I have often heard people argue at great length on the intelligence of the horse; one asserting that he is extremely clever, another that his brain power is nil, and whatever little intelligence he may appear to possess is due entirely to instinct. Neither of these views really covers this very complex subject. The truth is that the horse has a very limited reasoning power, but is never unreasonable. By this I mean that his actions are dictated by a straightforward system of logic, childish in its simplicity, to which he adheres through thick and thin when once an idea has entered his brain. This fact brings me to one of the most important attributes of the equine mind—namely, the horse's amazingly retentive memory.

✦══════════ THE MIND OF THE HORSE ══════════✦

I think a number of my readers will agree with me if I say that many of the lessons which we learnt at school were written in our mental note-book in vanishing ink. With the horse it is never so. The impressions which he receives from his trainer are deeply engraved upon his mind. From this will be seen the constant responsibility which rests upon the successful trainer, for while everything he does must have a definite object in view, he must never allow personal feelings of annoyance or a tendency to slackness to enter into his dealings with his charge.

A further point which must always be borne in mind is that the horse is not by nature an aggressive creature. His natural means of defence lies in flight; he is suspicious and always ready to resort to flight on the least provocation. To subdue so powerful an animal, if this were not the case, would in all probability be impossible. But it should ever be borne in mind that, once this nervousness is allowed to develop into panic, its useful properties disappear, and the trainer is faced with an animal that is no longer amenable to any of the methods which he is able to employ.

A common example will illustrate all that I have so far said. A horse encounters for the first time a steam-truck, which he regards with the utmost suspicion, stops and shies; his rider pushes him on, and after hitting him finally gets him past it. The next time he meets one his thoughts are on these lines: "I never did like the look of this thing, and, what is more, the last one I went near got me beaten." So he gives it a wide berth and receives more beating, and the next time he will not go within a mile of it. Whereas had he been led quietly past it the first time or two it would not subsequently strike him as any more ugly than a gas works. If we analyse this example we shall see how what I have said is borne out.

On the horse seeing a steam-roller, fear of the unknown immediately overcomes any curiosity he may feel, and left to himself in an unconfined space, as distinct from a street, he would shy, make a wide detour and continue his progress. His natural instincts, since he is in a street, would prompt him to turn round and take flight in the opposite direction. Memory, however, here takes a hand in the proceedings. Obedience to his rider has become so deeply impressed upon his mind that the urge forward that he now receives partially counteracts his first impulse to fly. He draws near it

✦ ————— THE MIND OF THE HORSE ————— ✦

and reluctantly consents to pass it, shying on to the footpath so as to give it as wide a berth as possible. But all this time an unnecessary amount of force has been used, and every blow received has turned his natural mistrust of the object into a greater certainty that here is something of which he takes a very poor view indeed. The logic from his point of view is sound: the object is for ever now connected with pain.

Here I would like to record an opinion which is the outcome of close observation of many people's methods in dealing with horses. I believe that more cruelty is inflicted by crediting the horse with more sense than in reality he possesses, than by underrating his intelligence. People who do not realise that the horse has a "one track" mind assume that because they themselves understand what they wish him to do, his failure to respond is due to obstinacy, and they punish him accordingly. The fact often is that he does not understand, and their increased efforts to make him do so merely confuse and finally cause panic, after which all hope of his understanding disappears.

Of course, abnormal intelligence in the horse might at first sight appear to be a desirable quality. Intelligence of a certain kind—namely, memory, and a quick response to impressions received—undoubtedly is. But there is another kind of intelligence which is far from being an aid to the trainer. It is really an abnormal development of the average horse's very limited reasoning power. This may tend to nullify his other qualities and instincts which we use for our own ends. As in man, so in beast, when reason develops instincts begin to fade, and the first glimmerings of "reasoning" on the part of the horse tend to have a result very detrimental to his usefulness, as understood by man. They may lead him to the realisation of his own physical superiority, and therefore the bluff which is normally the trainer's greatest asset is called.

In order to continue my examination of the horse's mind, I must now attack the subject from an entirely different viewpoint. I mean that, ceasing to base deductions from the observation of any individual horse, he must now be considered as nature intended him to be, merely as a unit in the corporate existence of a herd. The young horse is trained in comparative seclusion in the early stages. In his more advanced training whenever

◆══════════ THE MIND OF THE HORSE ══════════◆

possible trainers have always been aware of the advantage derived from his wish to associate with his fellows, as instanced by a trainer's double gig and giving a youngster a lead over a fence. Now, on his education being completed or nearly so, unless he is destined for the hard highroad to labour between the shafts of servitude, the chances are that his work in the hunting-field, on the racecourse, or in the ranks of a mounted regiment will take him back into nature's environment—the herd—but with a difference: an educated herd, composed of others like himself who have learnt specific accomplishments, the most important of which to illustrate his psychology is jumping.

I have led up to this point solely in order to consider the views of a number of people who affirm that their horses like jumping. In my opinion they neither like nor (if properly taught) dislike it. If they go over a fence they go for a reason, and that reason is the same one that prompted the proverbial hen to cross the road—namely, to get to the other side. In the case of a horse which is ridden, he jumps in accordance with instructions which he has learnt to obey. But the jump to him remains purely an obstacle. Now let us assume that in the course of a hunt or a race his rider falls and the horse gallops on and, as is frequently seen, jumps fence after fence. People have said that this is a proof that he likes jumping. In reality all that it proves is this, that in his intense desire to rejoin the “herd” and his love of galloping with them he is prepared to use the artificial accomplishment of negotiating obstacles which he has been *taught* in order to do so. If anyone doubts this let him remember that an untrained horse, however anxious he may be to follow the herd, would not do so over a fenced country, because it does not occur to him to treat as a jump that which he considers as a barrier, which after all is what a fence is intended to be. The horse, then, gallops with the herd and enjoys doing so. Here we may investigate the different characteristics of individual horses designated by such terms as “freegoing,” “full of dash,” “sluggish,” and similar phrases. These characteristics which are so apparent in the domesticated horse would be equally so in his wild state. The “honest” horse which will battle to the last to pass another would in wild life constantly challenge the leader of the herd, and no doubt would, as time went on, assume that position him-



Plate XXVII.

A backward seat with a vengeance, but without 'straphanging'



Plate XXV/III.

This time he proved that it was not always necessary (The height of the fence in the above photograph is 7 ft. on the landing side)

→===== THE MIND OF THE HORSE =====→

self. The sluggish animal would be quite content in a position of safety never far from the leaders, but with no ambition to pass them.

HOMING

One of the most mysterious attributes of the animal mind which manifests itself in many forms of wild life is the homing instinct. Horses possess this to a very marked degree. And any competent trainer may well be thankful that they do, for if properly taken advantage of it is one of the most useful factors in the handling of young horses.

I have always taught horses to jump for the first few lessons facing the exit of the school, and encountered little difficulty in doing so, whereas when jumping is commenced in the reverse directions, difficulties have frequently arisen. While on this subject let me take this opportunity of suggesting to instructors that when a school is not available, if the first lessons which a pupil receives in cantering are conducted *away* from home, the chances of the horses getting out of control will be greatly minimised. Failure to realise this fact has been the cause of numerous accidents.

THE BUNCH OF CARROTS

The domesticated horse's delight in his food has been noted by most writers on his psychology, and used by some trainers, including myself, as a very real help towards inducing him to perform what is desired. I have mentioned in another part of this book the oats which I use when loose schooling, etc.

But I wonder if it has occurred to those who have noted this fact that there is a reason for this pronounced greed on the part of the horses. A horse when loose in its natural state spends most of its time in cropping the pasture which surrounds it. Such a horse, if any distraction occurs, is sufficiently interested to look up and investigate further. But the horse deep in his manger is very different, and in most cases, if in good health, is entirely preoccupied. This is due to the fact that we have substituted a routine of work, being groomed and so on, for the horse's natural existence of more or less continual feeding. Instead of his day consisting of

one long continual, more or less unstimulating meal, he now receives "feeds," and it is only natural in the circumstances that these should occupy a position of paramount importance in his mind. Since this is the case, I may here note the obvious importance of regularity in this routine. Nothing sours a horse so quickly as uncertainty about when his next meal will come. A horse anticipates and may be said to possess an imagination, if such a term be taken to imply that he not only can remember an occurrence which has happened in the past, but, on the first indication that such a thing is about to happen again, can visualise the result, for good or ill, to himself.

We have seen that a horse once having received ill treatment is quick to anticipate trouble on his second meeting with the steam-roller.

I have referred elsewhere to the way in which a freegoing horse will in time slow up in front of a fence if constantly "yocked" on the mouth when jumping. And no better example of his anticipation could be found. A horse's excitement upon hearing the rattle of feed tins, the hunter's or old Army horse's pleasure at the notes of the horn or bugle, all bear witness to his imagination.

It may seem strange that an animal which appears at times to give the impression of considerable intelligence should at other times appear to be so muddle-headed. Let us bear in mind that these occasions as a rule are those when man is dealing with him. His mind is confused far more often than most people realise, and if this fact were appreciated and more patience used, fuller advantage could be taken of those mental powers which he certainly possesses.

If feeling is the most important, I think Smelling is the most unimportant, though I am frequently contradicted on this point. When a young horse is being trained and, during the process, is taken up to various strange objects to examine them, it will be noticed that as he gets up close to the objects he stretches out his neck as if to "smell." He possibly, as a result of these investigations, emits a snort. It is generally thought that he is endeavouring to smell the object of interest, and the snort is considered the result of smelling, whereas I think it is merely the result of *trying* to touch this object, sometimes with success and sometimes without. In both cases, however, the horse frequently snorts more or less continuously until accustomed to the object. This is generally put down to the result of smelling, though if the truth be told snorting is "produced" as a means of displaying a variety of emotions, such as terror, defiance (or anger), nervousness, curiosity, and of course vice. Only those who are continually living in an atmosphere of "young horses" can decide which force is operating.

HEARING

I always think Hearing is one of the most prominent and important of a horse's senses, but it is very largely governed by the sense of feeling. If, through the ability of the rider, a young horse concentrates on the job in hand, I think that the sense of hearing becomes subordinate to the sense of feeling, because, as stated in another portion of this book, the aids are the deaf-and-dumb language, by means of which we keep in continual conversation with our horse. These aids are signals which are made through feeling (principally), but if at any time "conversation" lapses or ceases, I think the sense of hearing then becomes of primary importance, at any rate it does in conjunction with sight. For many years now I have "lived" in an atmosphere of indoor riding schools, and in consequence have from time to time adhered to a particular programme daily with some horses in training. In doing this certain animals have been taken to my school each day, whilst I have possibly gone down one day by car, and ridden there on other days. On entering the school, my grooms have frequently said, "She heard your car long enough before you were here, sir," even though a great number of other horses and cars were frequently passing close to the various schools. I think, however, that hearing becomes of real importance when combined with the sense of feeling. For instance, if the rider used a pair of spurs, and immediately after using them on each occasion he clicked his tongue, in a very short time a click of the tongue is all that would be necessary to induce the horse to move, but the "click" must have followed the use of the spurs immediately on earlier occasions.

SIGHT

The sense of sight is of great, but not of the greatest, importance. There are times, however, during training, when, if the trainer is not careful, he will attach too much importance to *Sight*. As I said, I have spent many years teaching riders and horses "under a roof." I want readers to imagine that in the school there are several horses which have been used as "school" horses for some time and therefore know the sights there thoroughly. Let us suppose that on one rainy morning a student comes down with one of

those red waterproofs which the opposite sex seem to like so much, and it is hung up in one *corner* of the school. Owing to the way it hangs, neither the dimensions nor the colour are so glaring when going in one direction as they are in the other. In consequence the horses pass comparatively quietly when going in one direction, but create a considerable amount of fuss when going in the other. If, however, the horses are gradually led up to this waterproof and allowed to touch it with their muzzles, little or no difficulty will be experienced from that time onward. After very careful observation I think that, for some reason or other, there is a distinct "independent working" of the two eyes; I must admit I cannot say why, but I am convinced that such is actually the case.

TASTE

The last of the senses with which we have to deal, that of Taste, is well developed among horses. This is exemplified by the frequent refusal to eat mouldy or inferior hay, oats, etc. As in man so in animal, many unnatural tastes are acquired. The love of sugar is not natural, but is acquired by the horse, who is offered a lump from time to time. When he nibbles at it from curiosity, he discovers it is palatable. Some horses never having had opportunity will not attempt to eat sugar when it is offered.

Young horses when being loose schooled will frequently eat the grass on the completion of a jump in preference to the oats held out to them; but on gaining experience go straight to the latter.

The common method of catching horses which have been trained and then turned out is to rattle oats in a sieve, when they will usually leave the natural food with which they are surrounded for the more appetising diet.

As shown in my chapter upon loose schooling, this fact is of use to the trainer. Yet how often do we find it ignored, though punishment is continually referred to in discussing the subject. (Yet who would attempt to teach a dog to "sit up" without playing upon his taste?)

The abuse of the sense of taste is seen when horses are promiscuously fed by their owners on sugar, and, like spoiled children, become annoyed when the master does not produce the looked-for morsel. They may contract the vicious habit of biting when it is denied them.

LONG REINS

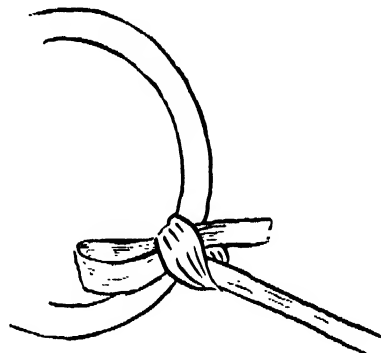


BEFORE explaining the procedure recommended in using long reins, let me strongly advise beginners to practise for some time on an old horse. I can assure my reader that even then it will be found far from easy; many pitfalls will be encountered, but little harm will be done, whereas, if it be attempted with a younger animal, he may be ruined for ever.

I agree with other writers that long reins are dangerous in the hands of the unskilled, yet if we never start, though we may make mistakes and encounter difficulties, we shall never learn. It is in profiting by mistakes that we progress.

The necessary equipment for long-rein driving in the elementary stages is a cavesson head collar, *half-moon* snaffle, two or three curb-chains with some pieces of string attached, and some long reins. With regard to the latter, personally I use plain lamp-wick $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches in breadth, and do not even have buckles attached, but secure them to the cavesson or the bit (as the case may be) by a knot which does not slip (Sketch No. 12), yet can be undone in a flash.

The cavesson itself will, of course, have been adjusted prior to the horse leaving the stable. On entering the school the bit should now be placed in the mouth, care being taken that it is fitted as high as possible—of course, avoiding discomfiture by unnecessary gagging. I also recommend that one, at least, of the curb-chains be used at this stage. Secure by the string one end of the chain to the snaffle-ring and pass the remainder *through* the horse's mouth, with the



No. 12.—A NON-SLIP KNOT

links uneven instead of smooth, as when fitted to a curb-bit. Fasten the other end to the opposite snaffle-ring in the same way. The length should be so regulated that the chain itself hangs *in* the mouth loosely, below the mouthpiece of the bit, and is not stretched tightly across it.

The actual object of the curb-chain, or chains (sometimes we have to use more than one), is to induce the horse to play with whatever is in his mouth, thus aiming at an important point, the relaxation of the lower jaw, right from the very earliest stages of training. I consider the effect of the curb-chains is far superior to the implement generally called a mouthing bit—I refer to the one with keys suspended from the centre joint. It must be self-evident, even to those who do not pretend to understand a great deal about horses and their peculiarities, that if the lower jaw is relaxed it is a physical impossibility for any animal to pull. I consider that perhaps the most important point in the training of a young horse is to ensure that the lower jaw is relaxed at all times.

I myself recommend that at first both reins be secured to the rings on the front of the nose-band, and that both should come direct to the trainer's hand, so that even though both reins are attached during the first few lessons, the horse is in fact merely being lunged. When the reins have been adjusted, the horse should be induced to go round in a circle. If necessary, an assistant may be used to urge the horse quietly forward by the light flicking of a driving whip from behind. Particular care must be taken that there is not the slightest sign of any violent usage of this whip. Readers will here observe that though, even at such an early stage, I am recommending the use of a whip, be it noted it must be used with discretion. Once the horse has been induced to go freely round in one direction, he should be very carefully "drawn" towards the trainer, who should reward him with some sort of a delicacy such as a carrot, and be given a pat on the neck. The same procedure should then be followed, but in the reverse direction.

At this stage I ought to make perfectly clear the importance I attach to one of the natural aids, and that is the voice, during the whole of the long-rein driving period in particular.

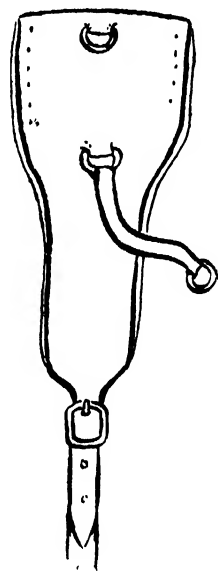
From now onwards I shall assume that every different movement that

LONG REINS



is made should be accompanied by verbal instructions: by this I mean that, as the horse is urged into a "trot" from a walk, the word "trot" should be used in the trainer's natural voice, and similarly, when it is desired that he should walk, the word "walk" be uttered in rather a drawling tone. By degrees it will be found that the horse will begin to understand the voice and practically comply with verbal instructions only, with very little help from the trainer. I cannot attach too much importance to this practice, as, throughout the whole of my career, it has been of inestimable value to me, particularly when training young animals of a highly strung nature.

When we have decided that the horse is circling equally well in both directions, the time has arrived for the introduction of an additional piece of equipment. A driving-pad should be brought into use (Sketch No. 13). Before adjusting it, care should be taken that the straps by which this pad is girthed should be pliable, since the fitting of this will provide for our young horse a new sensation to which he is always liable to show resentment. Unless we are prepared to use the utmost delicacy in this first attempt, the process of girthing is ever after liable to be associated with earlier resentment. Prior to the driving-pad being placed in position, the young horse should be allowed to both smell and touch it, and when he ceases to regard it with suspicion it can be placed on the back. I consider that at this stage an assistant is essential. When first placed on the horse's back, the girth should be folded back over the top of the pad, and when the latter is in position, the assistant who is standing on the opposite side of the horse to the trainer (who will be holding both the reins) can quietly let the girth down and hand to the trainer the buckle end for adjustment. The trainer then gradually tightens the girth just sufficiently to keep the pad in position, and at this stage I think some of my earlier advice will prove to be more than useful.



No. 13. —A DRIVING-PAD

Since now for the first time the horse, from his point of view, may have cause to play up, we must have our answer ready. We must remember that in a very



The long reims in use

Plate XXIX.

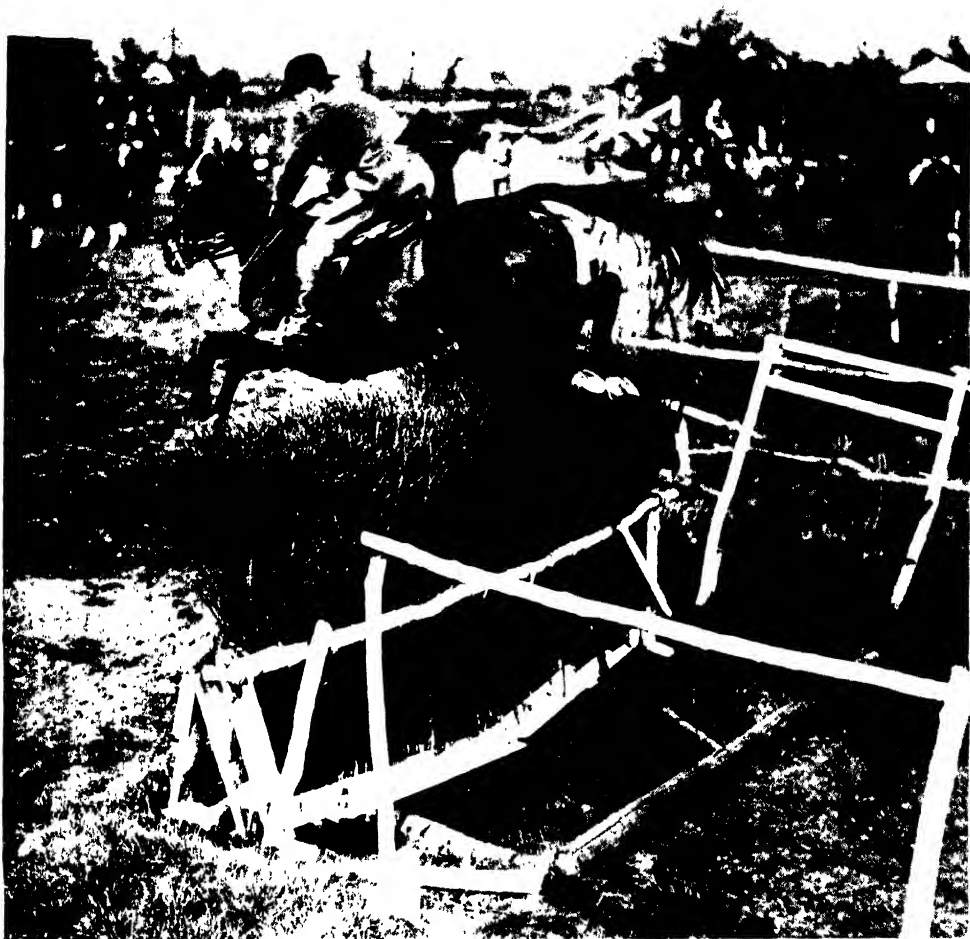


Plate XXX.

A good jump over the open ditch

 LONG REINS

short time we propose to put a rider where the pad now is, and that if we provide cause to the horse or allow him to dash away in excitement because of the presence of this pad, it is obvious that he will expect to do the same thing both when the saddle is first introduced and again when the rider is mounted for the first time.

It is all-important, therefore, that his tendency to do this must be checked first of all by the voice (which by now he should have learnt to understand), failing which the reins, still being held short, should pull sharply on the cavesson to enforce the command.

As soon as any resentment to the driving-pad disappears, if any has been seen, some delicacy should again be given to the youngster, and he should be patted for some time before he is allowed to move.

The procedure outlined I consider most important, as it will save considerable trouble when the animal is backed for the first time. The procedure now, as far as movement is concerned, is the same as before. The horse, with the driving-pad in position, should be quietly lunged round, and if, as frequently happens, there is any tendency to buck about, the voice and reins should be used to prevent this as far as possible.

The next stage, however, brings us to the first actual attempt at long-rein driving as opposed to the lunging which we have so far been concerned with.

The horse having been brought towards the trainer, his assistant should undo one of the reins from the ring of the cavesson, pass the released end over the horse's back and through the lower ring on the off side of the driving-pad, and secure it as before to the ring on the cavesson. The trainer will then have the rein on the near side coming direct to his hand, but the one on the off side will come across the back via the off-side ring on the pad.

The horse should now be sent round in a left-handed circle, the rein coming direct to the hand and be primarily used until the animal is going freely round. Then the off-side rein can gradually be tightened a little so as to get him used to that feeling. When this is accomplished, both reins must be changed over by the assistant and the procedure adopted for

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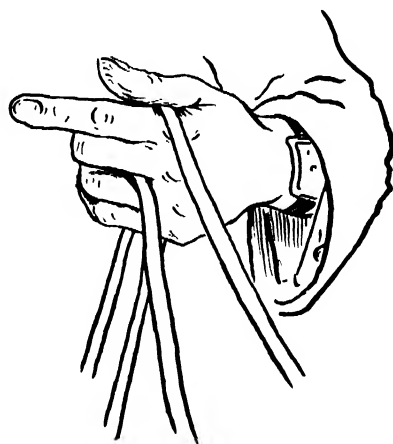
the reverse direction, and when this has proved satisfactory, we can take our next step.

We now alter the position of the inside rein. This should also be placed through the lower ring of the driving-pad PRIOR to coming to the trainer's hand. In this way our long-rein driving proper can begin. With the two reins in position, the horse should be driven round in both directions until he goes with ease. All the above lunging and driving should be done at a walk and trot until the work is done readily.

When this has been successfully accomplished, we must make a further and most important move by driving the horse straight forward and from behind. All this should be done at the DOOR-END of the school.

The horse must make a distinct turn in one direction or the other at the instigation of the trainer through tightening up the inside rein, but allowing the outside rein to remain behind the quarters and above the hocks. Again there may be slight resentment at the feeling of this outside rein, but with a little care and discreet use of the voice and reins the pupil will soon become used to this new feeling of the rein round the quarters. When the trainer is satisfied that this has no further terrors for the horse, the direction should be changed so that the opposite rein is dealt with in the same manner.

Assuming that the horse is going round in a left-handed circle and we wish to change from this direction to the right, when the animal is going into a corner (and there is enough room left for the pupil to go round in!), the trainer should take a full pace forward with his right foot and place his right hand as far as possible up the right rein. Pulling this, he should utter the word "change," and allowing the left rein to slide through his left hand as the horse complies with the pressure on the right

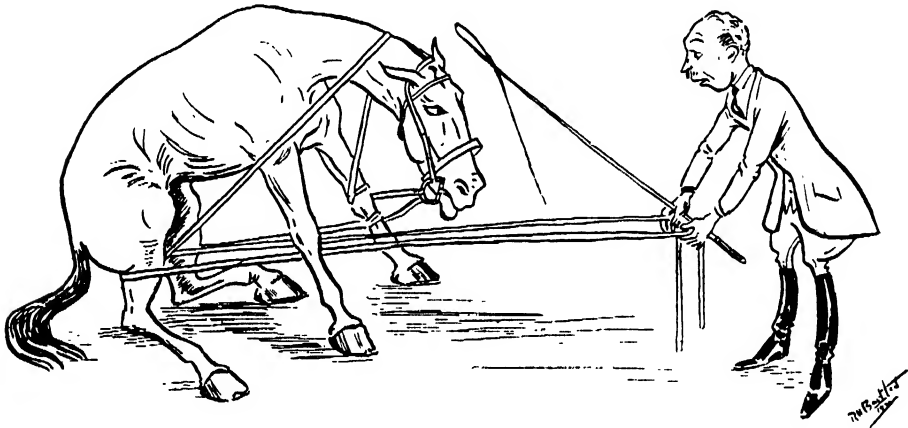


No. 14.—TO HOLD THE REINS FOR LONG-REIN DRIVING

LONG REINS

rein, should bring his right hand towards him and place the now shortened right rein in the correct position in his left hand (Sketch No. 14).

From now onwards the change of direction should be frequently practised, and as training progresses, cantering, passaging and reining back may take their place in the curriculum.



*"Let me strongly advise beginners
to practise for some time
on an old horse"*

✧ CHAPTER NINE ✧

TRAINING THE YOUNG HORSE

BACKING

FAR too much importance is generally attached to backing the young horse. It is usually associated, if not actually with battle, murder and sudden death, at least with the young horse "playing up." This "playing up" is frequently used as an opportunity for the rider to show off his powers of staying in the plate during the horse's antics. All this may be very spectacular, but unfortunately it is extremely detrimental to the ultimate end in view—namely, the production of a tractable hunter.

When the results of long-rein driving become apparent, inasmuch that the horse is driven easily and obeys the voice, preparation should be made for mounting him. A saddle should be placed on his back, though beforehand he should be allowed to touch it with his muzzle, and he should then be driven for a day or two with it in place of the pad. When the horse treats this procedure as a matter of course, a capable assistant is necessary to aid in further developments.

One rein only is attached to the cavesson. It is coiled up and held in the left hand of the trainer, who stands close to the horse's head. The assistant should stand facing the horse's shoulder, roughly in line with its forelegs, his left hand placed on the near side of the pommel of the saddle and his right on the *off* side. He bends his left knee as for a "leg up" and is raised by the trainer two or three times as if for mounting. Any sign of resentment or movement on the part of the horse is counteracted by the trainer by the use of the voice and rein. When the movement is accepted quietly by the horse the assistant should lay quietly over the saddle on his stomach, making much of the horse on its *off* side. This should be repeated for a day or two until no sign of resentment by the horse is met with. Finally the assistant is quietly placed in the saddle; the trainer himself puts the irons

✦══════════ TRAINING THE YOUNG HORSE ══════════✦

on the rider's feet so that no disconcerting movement takes place. The horse should now be led forward for a stride or two, stopped and rewarded with some delicacy, and the procedure repeated several times. When this move is also understood by the horse the trainer should gradually lengthen the rein until the animal moves round him as when lunged. From now onwards all should be plain-sailing, the rein should gradually be dispensed with and the horse allowed to traverse the full length of the school. While this is being done the trainer at first uses his voice as when lunging, but gradually cedes his power of control to the rider.

If properly carried out, this system of backing should avoid all the troubles often associated with the process. It should be emphasised that however expert the rider may be, it is of the highest importance that the youngster should not *learn* to make it necessary for him to put to the test his ability to "stick on."

MOUNTED TRAINING

Once the young horse has been backed, a considerable amount of his training should be proceeded with when mounted: a snaffle-bit only should be used in the early stages. Owing to lack of physical condition, I consider it an excellent idea, if possible, to divide the training period into two parts, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The morning period can profitably be devoted to mounted training and the afternoon to continuing the training on long reins. If this plan is followed, the simple forward movements necessary in the elementary stages may be carried out from the mounted position, whilst the more advanced exercises, such as cantering, passing, etc., may be continued on long reins. Improved physical condition combined with the diminishing need for dismounted work will render any division of the training into two parts unnecessary after about a fortnight or three weeks.

The first few mounted lessons are, in my opinion, of the utmost importance, and much care should be taken to avoid the contraction of bad habits. The trainer should be most particular from the commencement to insist on the young horse doing exactly as he is told and *ONLY* that. Whether the

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last sentence carries the necessary emphasis, I do not know, but I hope it does, for therein lies the whole secret of training young horses successfully. I will try to make this point clear.

The first item of importance is for a horse to stand still in all circumstances whilst being mounted. What is more annoying than following a supposedly trained horse about trying to get your foot in the stirrup, and then, when after a struggle you do succeed in mounting and want to light a cigar or cigarette, being unable to do so without help? What is more disconcerting for a lady than to go hopping about after her restless horse, with her groom or some horseman holding her foot in an iron grasp. She is generally too busy trying to avoid falling instead of attempting to mount. Eventually, when she is safely seated and the groom is trying to adjust the elastic, etc., on her apron skirt, the horse is probably occupying his time by curvetting in various directions. Do not ask me how to cure it (not in this chapter, at any rate). It ought never to have been allowed to start, but generally does during the first few mounted lessons, in which case it is mainly the trainer's fault. There is, however, always the chance of a trainer having carried out his part of the contract, and subsequent riders not being as careful as the trainer was. I am most particular in seeing that all my young horses are mounted from both sides and are also mounted from a block anywhere. They are never allowed to "move off" for at least a minute after the rider is in the saddle. I also encourage my family (who are my only assistants, thank goodness) to fidget about with the girth, throatlash, or their own clothing, etc., before moving off, and not the slightest movement of the horse is permitted before a definite signal is given that he is to do so.

It has already been explained that it is necessary to possess a thorough knowledge of "the aids" if a good horse is to be ridden effectively. It has also been explained that these aids are really signals and not a power which can enforce obedience at any time, should the horse need more than a signal. The young untrained horse, however, does not know *any mounted signals*. Therefore it is the trainer who decides what code is to be used and teaches what various signals mean. A racehorse and a hack are both capable of being ridden, but the codes which are used for training are distinct one from the other. It is not a great deal of use sending a message

to a man in the Morse Code if he only knows Semaphore. It is equally impossible for one of the men who drive the local Urban Council's carhorses to show off one of Captain Bertram Mills' beautiful hackneys to advantage.

In view of all these facts, when mounted training proper begins the trainer must perforce use a considerable amount of care in making out his programme. This requires a great deal of study, and when dealing with various horses no hard-and-fast rule can be adopted. It should, however, be remembered once more that a horse's REASONING power is limited and that his memory is excellent. In order to get the best results from the various signals, it is necessary that the trainer should give them carefully and correctly. Even then they will have to be repeated over and over again before they will be fully understood, and it is here that mistakes are frequently made.

I always consider that during the TRAINING of a horse, instead of "saying" the words—that is, using the aids—like ordinary good riders, the trainer must perforce keep repeatedly "spelling and spelling" them almost like a child is taught his elementary lessons at school. A great many people with an excellent knowledge of verbal English frequently have considerable difficulty in spelling. With many good horsemen and horsewomen the same difficulty is frequently presenting itself where horses are concerned. If a good trainer will teach a horse the language of riding, there are numbers of horsemen and horsewomen who might be willing to talk it, *but they cannot be bothered to learn to spell*. That is the real cause of the majority of failures in British riding. Comparatively few people have been to school; they therefore cannot "spell."

I have not the slightest doubt that to be in a fit condition to receive the various indications a horse must be calm and not excited. Yet one frequently sees people attempting to train young horses by what I call "knocking the corners off." When asked what all the trouble is about, the individual concerned will probably reply, "The such-and-such horse will not do something or other." Poor devil of a horse! It *will* not do this or that. Judging by the treatment it is receiving, I imagine it would be only too pleased to do anything if the punishment would stop; but probably, and for a variety of reasons, it *cannot*. Even more probably still, the horse

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does not even *know* what is required, chiefly because the inexperienced—or unknowledgeable—rider is unable to convey his wishes to the unfortunate animal. No; I think the less violence there is the better, always bearing in mind that in deprecating violence I do not recommend weakness in training. Make certain first of all that the youngster is physically capable of carrying out your wishes, and then make certain that you convey these wishes correctly to your pupil.

Carrying the above ideas fixed firmly in mind, let us now discuss the actual procedure to be adopted for training purposes. In an old military text-book it was held that the elementary training period should be occupied by teaching the horse to follow the reins and obey the pressure of the leg correctly. I am inclined to consider this a fairly good summary of the job in hand. The pupil has, up till now, been urged forward (impelled), the result of the use of a light lunging whip and voice *from the ground* whilst being driven on the long reins. Little or no pressure has been used on the mouth. Now, however, the animal must be taught to allow a certain amount of bearing to be taken on the bars of the mouth, and to go forward, *the result of impulsion received from the legs*. I think it can be said at this period that the legs (plus auxiliary powers, such as spurs or whip if necessary) create and supply impulsion, but the hands distribute it. In the very early stages the *pressure* of the legs to the young horse's sides will not convey any meaning, so I recommend that the trainer carries a long pliable polo whip (or even two if necessary) for the following reason. The rider draws the lower part of his leg to the rear and squeezes just behind the girth as an indication for the horse to go forward. In the beginning this does not convey the meaning intended to the pupil, because the signal is not understood. If, however, the trainer immediately follows this pressure with a flick of the whip or whips behind the legs, the animal will go forward at once. Equally quickly there must be a response from the rider—*i.e.*, a stroking and patting on the neck. At short intervals the horse should be carefully stopped and the above procedure repeated, when it will soon be found that the use of the whip will become entirely unnecessary, obedience following the use of the legs only. When this is accomplished the youngster can be said to have had its first lesson in direct impulsion.

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It is an excellent idea in the very elementary stages to use an assistant mounted on a second horse. The early objective should be to aim at teaching the pupil to go forward freely; and this is rendered much easier if he is ridden behind another horse for the first few lessons. Once it is found that the pupil goes forward freely, occasional turns and circles may be introduced, and the rider's aim should be to maintain a uniform pace throughout the procedure.

I consider that when these mounted lessons are first attempted, very little attention need be paid to the horse's head-carriage; I think it is preferable, in the beginning, for the trainer to concentrate on teaching the animal the combined signals of legs, body, and reins, etc. When training has progressed further, then, and then only, need any time be given to obtain correct head-carriage. I know this is contrary to many written views, but unless the trainer is really first class, there is always the risk of misleading the pupil by trying to do too many things at once. Once the animal understands readily when a turn or circle is intended, it will be time enough to attend to the carriage of his head, etc.

Owing to lack of physical condition the trotting periods can only be of short duration, but the intervals must not be entirely wasted. *As soon as I find my youngsters go forward freely* (but not before) and make some reasonable turns and circles, I always commence teaching them to "passage"; I do this for a twofold reason: (a) Unless a horse passages he cannot understand the real meaning of the legs and reins; and (b) to teach passaging *in the elementary stages*, I always teach from a dismounted position, thus giving the pupil a rest from carrying the weight of the trainer for a short time.

I should like to make perfectly clear that in the really elementary stages of teaching a horse to pass sideways both when dismounted and mounted, the trainer should be satisfied with the horse stepping sideways only. Do not bother too soon about correct direct or lateral bend. Detailed procedure to be adopted for teaching a horse to passage will be found at the end of this chapter.

There is a tendency among the inexperienced to keep constantly what I call "too tight a hold" on a youngster. This should be avoided,

= TRAINING THE YOUNG HORSE

and during each lesson a certain amount of work should be done with a loose rein. This has the advantage of teaching the horse to balance himself and the rider's weight without any assistance. The advantage of this will be very apparent later, particularly when going over rough or uneven country. During training a young horse will frequently attempt to increase the pace when the reins are loosened. If this loosening is gradually done, first of all at slow paces like a walk or trot, and then steps taken to prevent it, by the use of the reins and the voice (the latter in a tone of admonition), the whole proceeding will soon be understood.

In the early stages, again attention must not be paid to the head-carriage. It is obvious that a young horse which has not yet learnt thoroughly even on a taut rein, is bound to resort to his natural position when all tension is relaxed. In the later stages, however, further judicious use of the snaffle-rein from time to time will soon remind the pupil that the loosening of the reins is not a signal for him to drop his head.

The next pace which the horse must learn is the canter. When this is started, the value of the lesson in passing which the horse has previously been taught will soon become apparent, for one of its chief objects has been to make him really responsive to the lower part of the leg. He has already been familiarised with the canter by his previous long-rein training. As on the long reins, so when mounted, the canter should begin on a circle. The trainer should use the aid for cantering with discretion so far as collection is concerned, and realise that at first a certain amount of increase in pace is unavoidable. Care should be taken to avoid all excitement which may be consequent upon this increased pace. I consider that the production of so many bad-mannered horses is directly due to failure on the part of trainers to realise at that stage how liable young and particularly well-bred horses are to be excited. When the horse canters easily in both directions the circles may be gradually enlarged until the limits of the school are reached. When cantering has become a normal part of daily work, smaller circles are again introduced. These vary in size, the object being to obtain yet additional collection and control. It is now the task of the trainer to concentrate more and more upon collection. It is in this important matter that Army and police horses are definitely superior to most

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of those met with in civilian life. This is entirely due to riding-school training. I emphatically state that if only civilian trainers would concentrate more on collection in addition to producing the fine performers which they undoubtedly do, the task of finding a horse "suitable for a lady" would not present the difficulties which it does now. Further, the value of many a first-rate performer would have been enormously enhanced had real attention been given to what is an outstanding feature of the well-educated horse.

All the "school work" referred to is based on the exercises described in detail in another part of this book, under the heading of "The Teaching of Riding." These exercises are just as essential for teaching the horse to become subject to human control as they are for instilling into the rider the method of wielding it.

I fully realise that some individuals must train a youngster in comparative solitude, as other horses may not be available. But I recommend that where possible, when once the horse is amenable to control, he should from time to time be worked in company.

This, however, is not with the object of playing on his natural instinct to follow his companions, but rather to ensure that he does his own individual exercises without being distracted or excited because he is with other horses.

In addition to all that I have written about school work, every young horse must receive sufficient road work to familiarise him with what represents his ordinary surroundings during his subsequent career. This familiarisation has the additional advantage of giving him relief from the intensive training in the school, to which no young horse should be subjected for very long periods.

To conclude, I would impress finally upon all who attempt to train young horses the necessity of endeavouring at all times to *understand* them. In an early chapter I tried to make clear some of the phases of a horse's mind. The man who sincerely studies horses from a psychological angle is on the right road to becoming a successful trainer, but though he may be highly gifted in many and various aspects of riding, the would-be trainer who ignores the horse's viewpoint is doomed to comparative if not entire failure.

PASSAGING

In passaging (dismounted) to the right the horse should be taken to the end of the school or menage as far from *the entrance* as possible, faced towards the boards, rails, or wall, and at right angles to them. The trainer should then hold the reins under the jaw with his left hand and carry his light-cutting whip in the right hand. When moving off he should push the horse's forehand towards the exit with the left hand, and tap the horse just behind the girth with his whip; the pupil will soon start moving sideways towards the door. After a few strides, he should be allowed to stop, patted, and stroked, and the procedure repeated until the whole length of the school (with two or three stops) has been completely traversed. When this has been accomplished, the same procedure should take place from the other side of the school, again from the end of the school farthest from the entrance. The reason for facing the outside of the school on each occasion is to minimise the pressure on the bars of the mouth, which would be more severe if he was facing the centre of the school. The reason for laying down that the animal should be taken to the end of the school farthest from the door is that it is much easier to induce a horse to do anything towards the exit from the school and towards home.

After a few days of using the whip, I think that a shorter stick or cutting whip should be available. Instead of using it as before, however, the trainer should, whilst still holding the reins with his left hand, *hold the stirrup-iron* with his right, and instead of at once using the cane should press the knuckles of his right hand to the horse's sides just behind the girth. This knuckle pressure is intended to indicate the pressure of the lower part of the leg. If the knuckle pressure results in a correct movement, *no cane will be necessary*. If, however, no movement follows the pressure, a light tap with the cane must immediately follow the pressure of the knuckles. In a very short time the youngster will know what is required, and will step sideways as the result of the pressure of the knuckles only. When the trainer considers that the indication by pressure is understood, subsequent training can be continued mounted, care being taken that the exercise is commenced from the same place in the school. The leg, of



Plate XXXI. *Passaging to right (Note
incorrect lateral bend)*



Plate XXXII *Passaging to right
(Correct lateral bend)*



Plate XXXIII.

'Banging on a bit' in true hunting style

TRAINING THE YOUNG HORSE

course, will replace the knuckles and the cane will be lightly used in the same place as before, until the leg pressure is obeyed. As training progresses passaging should be attempted from different parts of the school, including both past and away from the exit. When this is accomplished more trouble should be taken to ensure the correct lateral bend being maintained at all times. Further, in addition to the (full) passage, the half-passage should also be introduced. Here, again, the trainer will be well advised to begin at one of the quarter-markers farthest from the doors, the horse being placed parallel to the side of the school and facing the exit. From this position he should be moved off by the use of the leg required, and the pressure on the reins should be regulated so that the animal not only moves sideways, but forwards, and at the same time. If possible the movement should be completed by arriving at the quarter-marker nearest the other end of the school, and on the opposite side, having walked sideways and forwards throughout the whole movement. The difference between the full and half passage is that in the full the horse moves sideways only and crosses his legs in doing so, whereas in the half-passage a sideways and forward movement takes place at the same time. Both exercises, when carried out correctly, ensure that the animal obeys the reins and obeys the pressure of the legs correctly. They are also invaluable for teaching young riders to attain co-ordination between hand and leg.

When the passage is carried out in a double bridle, care must be taken that in addition to a lateral, a direct bend is maintained throughout the whole of the period.

REINING BACK

An important stage in the curriculum which must now be approached is "reining back." This should first of all be attempted on foot, since otherwise the horse will not understand what is required of him. The trainer's efforts, unless made on foot, will lead to severity in the use of the bit, while the rider's weight will further increase the horse's difficulty when carrying out this foreign movement. When, however, the rein-back is required with the trainer mounted, he should use the lower part of the legs to create impulsion, at the same time leaning slightly forward to

TRAINING THE YOUNG HORSE

lighten the quarters. The reins must be used in such a manner as to prevent any forward movement actually taking place, the pressure of the legs being relaxed to allow a rearward movement to follow this pressure of the reins.

The two or three rearward strides which take place in the early part of these lessons must not be confused with correct reining back, but are better described as "going backwards out of hand." When the horse gets used to the actual movement of walking backwards, the rider's legs must gradually be used to control this movement in the same way in which the reins control a forward one. Particular care must be taken that the horse in subsequent training reins back on a perfectly straight line. It must be understood that this programme has so far been carried out on a snaffle. When the double bridle is used, the rein-back must be achieved with the horse's lower jaw relaxed. The significance of this relaxation and the method for its production is set down in my succeeding chapter.

❖ CHAPTER TEN ❖

❖ ————— BITS AND BITTING ————— ❖

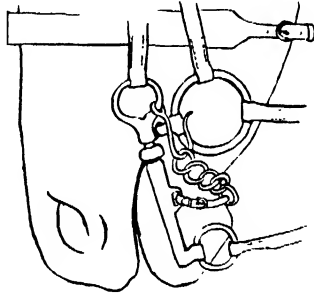
I CANNOT remember how many different sorts of bits there are in existence, but I know it is a very large number. Of what use they all are I have often tried to discover, but have never succeeded; it is certain that most of them would cease to exist if horsemen or horsewomen knew a little more about the subject of biting.

The more one delves the more impossible it seems to explain, to those only partially interested, certain fundamental facts. If it were not generally believed that the bit was a brake, and that horses were controlled by it, practically all the what we might call "fancy" bits would automatically cease to exist. Even when a certain bit is effective for a time on a horse which has previously been troublesome, the handling of this instrument by an ignorant rider soon makes the animal callous to its effect, thus rendering it useless.

In addition to the severity attached to many of the different "appliances" (I think that is a better term than "bits" for most of them) in existence, the large majority are ill-proportioned. Unfortunately we cannot blame the users, so we must blame the manufacturers for this. I regret to say that not only "fancy" bits, but bits suitable for ordinary use are also badly proportioned; this is still unfortunately true, even when they have been constructed by many first-class firms. Perhaps a very short explanation will help even the sceptical.

When a bit is placed in the horse's mouth, it is the mouthpiece which is fitted. In the case of the curb-bit, the adjustment and fitting of the curb-chain follows the fitting of the mouthpiece; when correctly fitted, the chain should lay in and act in the chin-groove. How is this possible if, as one frequently sees, there is 2 inches of leg ABOVE the mouthpiece?

As a result of this conformation a gall frequently occurs on the branches of the lower jaw (*above the chin-groove*), caused by the curb-chain "riding" too high in action, instead of acting in the chin-groove. If makers would remember this and make as *little* leg above the mouthpiece as possible (Sketch No. 15), they would minimise the chances of any rider going wrong in the fitting, as it would be practically impossible for the curb-chain to



No. 15.—THE CORRECT FITTING FOR A CURB-BIT CHAIN

act anywhere else but in the chin-groove. They would also do their share in helping, at any rate, towards the horse's comfort. As the real secret of good biting *is* comfort, it is *impossible* for a horse to be comfortable in many of the weird contrivances used as bits; they should at once be condemned.

So far we have only dealt with what we might call the machinery; now we might safely turn our attention to the "mechanic," and unfortunately we have still a more formidable task before us. I am sure that there are many riders who could give a polished display of horsemanship on the severest bits made; others, I am sorry to say, would fail lamentably on the mildest. The reader naturally says: "Ah, bad hands, I suppose!" My reply is: "Yes" and "No." The ill-usage the horse's mouth receives *may* be caused by bad hands, but the cause of this ill-usage is more frequently ignorance. A very large number of riders who have bad hands today could be improved 50 per cent. in a week by education. I will take three different examples.

There is first the individual who, because a certain horse pulls or leans on his (or her) hands, at once thinks a more severe bit is necessary. This

BITS AND BITTING

is assumed without ever considering for a moment who is at the other end of the "strings."

The second class consists of those who will not ride their horses in anything but a snaffle. They "like their mounts to take a nice hold" all the time, which, of course, hides a lot of things! We are also invariably informed by these folk that "a snaffle is much less severe than a curb-bit"—this despite the fact that the animals they ride lean on their hands all day long.

Lastly, we have those who ride about equipped with a double bridle, but who (unknown to themselves) publicly announce that they do not know what it is for. I refer to those who ride about with the bridoon rein taut and the curb-rein hanging in festoons.

Destructive criticism, however, is of little value. What, then, is the remedy to be applied? I believe the reply can be summed up in a few words: **THE NECESSITY OF A KNOWLEDGE OF FLEXIONS.** Without this knowledge little can be attained, except perhaps on a racecourse. It is this knowledge which enables the expert to use the severest bit; he will, by the lightest use of his fingers, first of all produce a flexion and through a flexion complete subjection. Anyone who lacks the necessary knowledge will, on the same bit, cause the same horse to set his jaw through the pain caused by his rider's ignorance. The comfort so essential to a horse's mouth can be maintained with the most severe bit possible, but both *horse and rider must have* this knowledge of flexions.

Before discussing the pros and cons of some of the bits in existence, I hope it will be clear that there cannot be any pros or cons if riders cannot use them correctly. They all depend on the manipulator, therefore before condemning any bit, make certain whatever is complained of is the fault of the bit, no matter what form of bit is being used.

Riders must remember from the beginning that a bit is a device by which, with the help of the reins, we convey certain of our wishes to the horse. These wishes or messages cannot be understood at once, and in consequence horses must be taught what different indications mean. The only way in which this can be accomplished is by adopting the principle which governs all the other parts of training—*i.e.*, discomfort and relief

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from it. If a horse carries his head low and a gag-snaffle is used, one merely pulls at the reins of that bit *until* the head is raised, when tension is released and discomfort ceases. To produce a direct flexion the curb-rein is (principally) used, and when the neck is arched and the lower jaw relaxed, pressure on the bars of the mouth again should cease.

There are three distinct kinds of bits in use—the snaffle, the curb-bit, and the Pelham. It has been said by more than one writer that a gag-snaffle has an action peculiar to itself. I am almost inclined to agree with this, though the action of a plain snaffle can be made very similar to a gag if the rider rides with hands very high.

No matter which bit is in use, the action must be one of four:

(1) The nutcracker action of the jointed snaffle, which acts on the bars, lips, and tongue when the hands are kept low.

(2) On the corners of the lips, as when a gag is used, or if the hands are raised high with an ordinary snaffle.

(3) On the chin-groove and bars, when the curb-bit is used in conjunction with the curb-chain.

(4) On the bars in the case of an unjointed snaffle or top rein of a Pelham. By raising the hands this bit could be made to act also on the corners of the lips.

I will first endeavour to explain the action and uses of **THE SNAFFLE**. When this bit is mentioned most people at once visualise the type in general use, the jointed snaffle. It is not usually understood that *anything* that passes through the horse's mouth and acts directly and only on the bars is a snaffle—a piece of rope, a chain, a poker, anything. The ordinary double bridle *without the curb-chain* becomes two snaffles instead of a snaffle and curb-bit.

When the training of any young horse begins, some sort of snaffle is invariably the first bit used; generally it is of the jointed type. During the last five years, however, I have stopped using the jointed, but instead have used the half-moon snaffle entirely during elementary training of my young horses; the result has been extremely satisfactory. I consider that the nutcracker action of an ordinary jointed snaffle is much more

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painful to the mouth than is generally supposed. As comfort is the secret of good biting, particularly in the very elementary stages of training, I recommend readers to give the half-moon snaffle a trial.

The function of a snaffle, when first used by itself on a young horse, is principally to familiarise the youngster with pressure on the bars of the mouth. Later it may be used for raising the head and neck if they are carried too low, though, as explained in this chapter, I prefer a gag for that purpose.

In this country few trainers attempt to produce a flexion with a snaffle, whereas considerable attention is given to this practice abroad. Personally, I am not in favour of it as a general rule, though at times, but only in the school, I have used it with success when training awkward-mouthed horses.

I think the important point to bear in mind concerning any type of snaffle-bit is the fact that its power is extremely limited. If this is thoroughly understood by readers, they will not attempt by muscular effort to give this form of bit a power it does not and cannot possess. If this all too common practice is persisted in, the only result is to destroy the all-important sensitiveness of the bars of the mouth.

From time to time one hears of such and such a horse possessing a "snaffle mouth." To be entitled to such a designation the animal would have to be capable of flexing and bending to this form of bit at all paces, and such animals are extremely rare.

During elementary training it is frequently necessary for a young horse to carry his head and neck higher than he does naturally. Similarly, at a later stage, it is of particular importance that the neck is not lowered when a direct flexion is produced. In the ordinary way a plain snaffle is the bit used for training purposes, sometimes solo and sometimes with a curb-bit, according to the stage of training. At the risk of being adversely criticised, I recommend the use of a gag in lieu of a plain snaffle whenever such alteration in head carriage is desired.

In advising the use of a gag-snaffle during elementary training, I perhaps should preface my remarks concerning it by making clear the fact that I *always* use a standing martingale on *all* young horses until their

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training is completed. Naturally I am very particular about the fitting of the martingale. This form of martingale allows me to use a gag-snaffle, but only *in the school*, and as at that time I am primarily interested in the raising of a youngster's head and neck, I manage this with very little physical effort. If, however, one has to keep "niggling" away with the hands raised on an ordinary snaffle, in addition to the fatigue of this method, I think there is a tendency to bruise the horse's mouth more as a result of this "niggling."

It has been contended that one cannot ride a horse on a gag-snaffle only, as it has no stopping effect. About 1910, when I was stationed in Edinburgh, we had a horse posted to the battery which caused a good deal of trouble and also damage—both physical and structural. It eventually became my job to try to put matters right, and for some time it all seemed hopeless, for I made no progress whatever. As a last resort I tried a gag-snaffle and standing martingale, and there was improvement at once. I eventually used this horse for all my early competitions and displays with considerable success. Those who were in the battery with me at the time will remember the horse as “Spitfire.”

A more recent example of the combination gag and standing martingale is shown by the success of Captain E. B. de Fonblanque's "War Baby," on which he won so many jumping prizes both at International and other shows.

CURB-BITS

To attempt to describe the various curb-bits in existence is not necessary. Most of them are merely forms of torture, and their use, except by an expert, ought to be abolished, and would *never* be necessary if the animals they are used on had not fallen into bad hands at some time.

At the risk of much adverse criticism I suggest that, except for horses which have had their mouths spoiled, there are only two curb-bits worth using: the first, one with a half-moon mouthpiece, and the second, a straight mouthpiece with a port; the important point being that both mouthpieces must be capable of *sliding half an inch*. On this account the action of both the bits recommended is very similar.

The action of curb-bits should be very carefully studied, for it is this bit which produces a flexion. As I have already said, a flexion is all-important, as without it the rider has little chance of getting the best out of a horse, and it is impossible to maintain collection and balance for any length of time. The horse will therefore not be under supreme control.

When correctly fitted the mouthpiece of the curb-bit should be hanging so that it is 2 inches above the corner incisor teeth; it follows that the mouthpiece will then automatically rest on the bars of the mouth when not being used. When, however, the rider feels the curb-reins, it is the fact of the mouthpiece being in contact with the bars of the mouth which enables it to act as a pivot. As the reins are pulled, the bottom of the leg or cheek is drawn backwards, which brings pressure to bear on the mouth, and at the same time has the effect of pushing the upper part of the cheek forward, which action tightens the curb-chain.

In the case of a curb-chain which is too long, the leg of the bit can go so far to the rear as to become in prolongation one with the reins. In this case the curb-bit is a curb-bit in shape but not in action. It is merely acting as an additional snaffle, except for a very slight downward pull on the top of the head caused by the head-stall tightening. I have read on several occasions that this latter movement is really of importance, but I do not agree. If, however, instead of the curb-chain being slack it is correctly fitted, it will prevent the leg of the bit from going so far to the rear as in the above example, and will have a double action, caused by the mouthpiece pressing against the bars of the mouth, whilst at the same time the curb-chain is acting in the chin-groove. It is this action from which we must obtain our flexion. It should be noticed that in the case of the two bits which I recommend, when suspended at rest in the mouth the mouthpieces lie at the bottom of the slide. It is not *until* the rider feels the reins and the curb-chain tightens that the mouthpiece slides from the bottom to the top of the slide, where of course it becomes a fixture. This is the *point of real importance* in all double-bridle work. From the time that the rider feels the rein, the mouthpiece tends to go gradually upwards, and when at the top becomes a fixture and unyielding. This fact a horse also soon finds out. He realises that as the mouthpiece is sliding his

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discomfort will be more pronounced when it eventually reaches the top of the slide. *To avoid this* he soon learns to relax his lower jaw and arch his neck ; in other words, he learns to flex at the slightest movement of the curb-rein.

In advocating the use of curb-bits with sliding mouthpieces and condemning the use of those which have fixed mouthpieces, I make the following explanation : When a sliding mouthpiece reaches the top of the slide it becomes a fixture until the pressure on the rein is relaxed. Such being the case, those of the sliding description possess all the qualities claimed for the fixed, with the additional advantage of having the very necessary give-and-take action not contained in the other.

PELHAMS

A Pelham is a bit that has a snaffle action and a curb-bit action in the same mouthpiece. It will at once be realised by many that to have the same mouthpiece to raise and lower the head is really wrong in principle. It has also been stated that one must not use both reins at the same time when using a Pelham. As in other matters connected with riding, however, theory is not always correct. There is undeniably a large number of horses which a Pelham seems to suit, so why not put theory on one side, and if a horse goes well in a Pelham use one?

In India, where much excellent polo is seen, it is a very familiar sight to see not only Englishmen but well-known Indians playing polo with a single rein on the curb portion of the Pelham. Theoretically, of course, a horse's head and neck could be lowered too much, but such is not actually the case, so if a Pelham is used on a horse which has caused trouble in other forms of bits, and is found suitable, I suggest that it be used without worrying about the theoretical side of it.

The usual form of Pelham in use is a half-moon, though occasionally one sees jointed Pelhams and also those with a straight bar. There is, of course, in addition the Port mouth Pelham. The latter has the same shaped mouthpiece as the Ward Union curb-bit as far as the mouthpiece goes, and so far as the action goes also. Apart from the difference in shape

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of the leg of the bit, this is practically the regulation Army bit. Here, at once, we have an excellent example of the value of a Pelham. Regiment after regiment use this bit and, except in very rare instances, on all their horses. If it is possible to use such a bit successfully on such a large percentage of horses, it speaks volumes for its efficiency.

A GENERAL NOTE ON MOUTHPIECES

Realising from the first the necessity of comfort, it is hardly necessary to point out that the various uneven mouthpieces seen from time to time must of necessity cause pain, and generally unnecessary pain. Because of the unevenness of a twisted snaffle, it is usually more severe in action than one of the plain variety. A similar remark applies to a chain-snaffle. In the case of some curb-bits there is such a thing as a rough surface on one side of the mouthpiece and a smooth one on the other ; I always think that if a horse is trained correctly, a rough or uneven mouthpiece is totally unnecessary. When one has sifted the wheat from the chaff, I myself think that the best of all round mouthpieces is of the half-moon description. It ensures sufficient pressure on the tongue without making it unnecessarily uncomfortable, and also ensures an even bearing on the bars of the mouth.

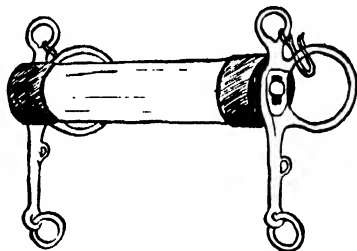
I now single out two other special bits for use. One I know the name of and the other I do not. The first one is a Banbury, a bit that has on many occasions given most excellent results.

This Banbury bit, which is frequently used with success, differs from most other bits because, instead of the leg going through the mouthpiece, the mouthpiece goes through the leg. As the receptacle in the leg is also a slot, it will be seen that the mouthpiece is capable of both revolving and sliding. Further, one leg of the bit can be used separately from the other. This fact is frequently used in arguments for and against the value of this bit, but it still remains that the bit is always worth trying when in difficulties. The majority of curb-bits in use are constructed with a port, or are half-moon in shape. The Banbury mouthpiece, however, being straight, acts on the tongue prior to reaching the bars, and this fact is frequently

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given as the reason for its success. I am not certain that this conclusion is always a good one, because it may lead to a further exploiting of the theory that it allows the tongue to act as a cushion. At one time I used to believe very strongly in the efficiency of that theory, but I have now come to the conclusion that the more the tongue is left alone the better; I do not know a worse habit than to have a horse which puts its tongue over the bit; its attention is never on its job, and many think that pressure on the tongue is one of the causes of this pernicious habit.

The bit whose name is unknown to me, I propose now to discuss. This is a Pelham built on the Kerro principle. It is a sort of Banbury-Kerro-Pelham. The centre mouthpiece (made of steel) goes through the legs as in a Banbury, but this mouthpiece also passes through a light wooden roller, which therefore becomes the mouthpiece proper. At each end of this wooden mouthpiece, for rather more than an inch, rubber is inlaid. The diameter of the mouthpiece is $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches (Sketch No. 16).



No. 16.--A PELHAM BUILT ON THE KERRO PRINCIPLE

I have used this bit with much success on horses which have had hard or one-sided mouths. This success is probably due to the greater diameter of the bit bringing the pressure on the bars on a fresh surface, and to that pressure being modified by the bearing surface of the bit being of rubber. Another merit is that it must give the much-used portion of the bars of the mouth a rest.

I have, of course, only used this bit as a means to an end in the school, and afterwards resorted to one or other of the double bridles previously recommended. It may be of interest to many to know that it was almost impossible to hold my little mare "Amber" when I bought her; that,

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indeed, is the reason I came by her! I cured her entirely *by the aid of* this bit, riding her personally for eight months in the school in no other, prior to continuing her training on an ordinary double bridle.

MARTINGALES

The question of which is the most efficacious type of martingale for all-round purposes is still curiously misunderstood by most hunting people, whilst there is little disagreement among experts on the subject.

For instance, at the present time we frequently see riders both hacking and hunting, with the running martingale placed on the snaffle-reins, despite admitting that the function of a snaffle is to raise the horse's head and neck. Moreover, the only reason for its use in conjunction with a curb-bit is to maintain the height of the head and neck as a counter-action to the lowering tendency of the curb. Now the running martingale has no power in itself to lower a horse's head, *but*, placed on the bit-reins, it does enhance the action of the bit to perform its proper function. It is evident to me, from misconception of its use, that there is still a belief that a running martingale ensures a horse's head being kept down. It does not. If it is the intention of the rider to prevent a horse carrying his head above a certain height, the only way in which this can be achieved is by the use of a standing martingale, and here we come to another fallacy. "Yes, yes, but not out hunting; it's dangerous," they say. Readers, it is not dangerous. A horse does not fire his head in the air at any time throughout the parabola of a leap. He keeps his head *low* if it is not pulled into the air by the straphanging of the person on his back.

The point of importance is the fitting of the standing martingale and not the instrument. I have used a standing martingale for the last twenty years, and insisted on my family doing the same, and I am not aware of any single fall being caused by it.

I know we cannot connect show jumping with hunting, but it must be admitted that 14 feet of water or a big triple bar is a much wider stretch than most obstacles jumped in the hunting-field. My own little mare "Amber," 14.3 hands high, is always ridden in a *shortish* standing

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martingale, and has not been in the water four times in four years, and can jump 18 feet of water. It must not be thought that I would advise all and sundry to fit standing martingales at once. But if it does become necessary to keep a horse's head down, then a standing martingale is the only satisfactory way this can be accomplished, and it will not have the harmful and dangerous effects attributed to it.

An Irish martingale ensures bearing on the bars of the mouth only, and it also ensures that the reins cannot be thrown over the horse's head ! Personally, I consider it much more useful for steeplechasing, when a plain snaffle is used, than for anything else.

✧ CHAPTER ELEVEN ✧

✧ ADVANCED MOUNTED TRAINING

FLEXIONS

WHEN the trainer considers that his pupil is becoming handy, and is obeying the aids reasonably well whilst being ridden on a snaffle, the more serious part of his education may be begun. This consists of elementary training in flexions, so that as soon as possible his further mounted training can be continued on a double bridle.

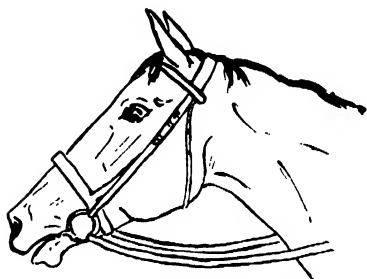
The usual age for beginning the training of a horse, other than a race-horse, is three to four years old. Generally, up to the moment when a youngster has been introduced to a double bridle, he has carried his head in a natural position, with his nose extended and without arching his neck. I should like to emphasise the point that if flexions are taught, as I advocate, in the early stages, the mounted training on a snaffle will not be interfered with. Two other benefits follow this method. The first is that the affected muscles are not only suppld, but developed in such a manner as to avoid fatigue. The second is that the chances of resistance to the curb-bit are minimised by the preparatory training received. When the moment arrives for the horse to be taught to obey the indications of a double bridle, and in consequence arch his neck, he will bring into play muscles which have been little used during the whole of his existence.

I regret to say, however, that a large number of those who attempt to train young horses are unmindful of this most important point.

One frequently hears the inexperienced complaining, for instance, that they cannot get a four-year-old to carry his head higher. They do not realise that the animal is not physically capable of doing so unless there has been gradual development of the affected muscles. They also expect the arched neck, which they admire so much in the finished product, to be seen at the end of a few days' training.

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It will easily be seen from what I have said that there is more in this double-bridle business than meets the eye of the uninitiated. This haphazard putting on of the bridle in question "to see how he goes in it" is



No. 17.—BEFORE FLEXING

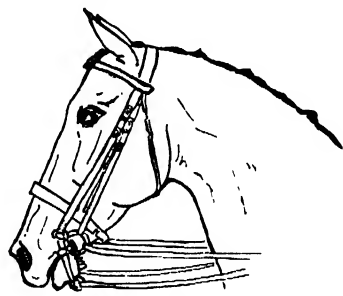
what I would summarise as the root of all evil. Pulling, tongue over the bit, rearing, head pulled into the chest—oh, everything is caused by this ignorance. I have no doubt, therefore, of the paramount importance of separating the elementary lessons in double-bridle training from the snaffle work. The novel effort, both mental and physical, which this form of training entails, must receive the

horse's undivided attention. No place, therefore, is more suitable for these first steps than the stall in which he lives, and that is where I invariably start my "double-bridle work." There is nothing there to distract the animal's attention in any way (see Sketches Nos. 17 and 18).

Procedure

It will be seen from my chapter on "bitting" that I lay particular stress on the point that the bridle used on young horses should have a movable mouthpiece. Therefore a double bridle of this description should be fitted when flexions are commenced. In addition, whether the animal actually has needed it up to now or not, a standing martingale should also be used. The reason for this martingale is to render it impossible for the horse to "fire" his head into the air beyond the reach of the trainer, thus rendering the intended flexion abortive.

The horse we intend to flex should be turned round with his tail to the manger, as though to be put on the pillar reins, with the double bridle which we propose to use comfortably adjusted. Owing to the necessity of a standing martingale, a saddle or roller should be placed on the horse. The trainer should then stand in front of his pupil and take



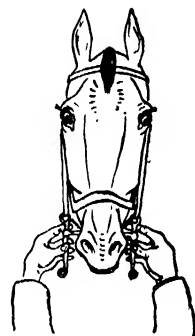
No. 18.—CORRECTLY FLEXED

— ADVANCED MOUNTED TRAINING —

hold of the cheek of the curb-bit. His index fingers should be placed above the mouthpiece and behind the leg of the bit, the last three fingers under the mouthpiece also behind the leg, but with the thumb below the mouthpiece and in front of the leg of the bit (*vide* Sketch No. 19).

Where necessary, and *without disturbing the position of the leg* of the curb-bit, the head and neck should be raised to the correct height by pushing the mouthpiece of the bit upwards into the corners of the lips. When the bit is raised to the required height, the fingers should lightly manipulate the bit so as to bring the curb-chain into action.

The pressure that follows the action of the curb frequently results in the pupil raising his head to evade it, and it is here that the standing martingale performs its task. The pressure on the mouth, however, should not be relaxed, but evenly and delicately maintained until the horse tries the only alternative left to him of lowering his head and relaxing his lower jaw. On this movement occurring, the trainer must instantaneously open his fingers, releasing the bit entirely, and at once pat the horse on the neck or gentle him in some way.



No. 19. --ELEMENTARY FLEXIONS

The procedure is then repeated, and in a very short time the horse will understand what is required of him and will associate the action of the double bridle with the movements described.

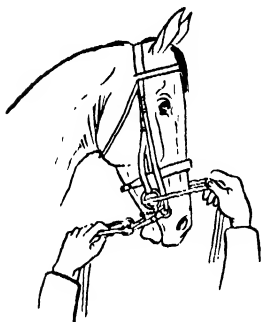
Some writers seem to lay a great deal of stress on the pupil retaining the correct position of head and neck during the first few attempts. I disagree. I consider that at the very beginning of the lessons in flexions the main factor is to be satisfied with a slight arch of the neck and the fact that the lower jaw is relaxed even if the neck is lowered a little the first few times. When the trainer considers that the horse thoroughly understands what is required when the curb-bit is used, the snaffle-rein can be taken over the head, and used to prevent the head and neck being lowered (*vide* Sketch No. 20).

After the trainer is satisfied that the horse also responds easily to the indications for a direct flexion and is automatic in response, a lateral flexion should be attempted. Again I disagree with many authorities who advo-

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cate at this stage a suppling of the neck. The only lateral flexion that I have ever attempted during the last fifteen years is the movement of the head in the direction desired just sufficiently for the trainer (if he is mounted) to see the eye and cheek in the direction in which the bend has taken place—*i.e.*, a correct lateral flexion.

I consider this movement ample, and that if more is attempted it is very liable to lead to the neck becoming too supple for the average rider, and may result in the horse obtaining what has been called an indiarubber neck. I do not deny that it may be necessary in the hands of experts who desire subsequently to train the animal for high-school work, etc., but I do not recommend it for general utility.



No. 20.—DISMOUNTED FLEXIONS

By the time that the lessons outlined have been mastered, I think it can be safely assumed that training on the snaffle has reached a fairly advanced stage, so that with the animal responding dismounted to both lateral and direct flexions in a satisfactory manner, a certain portion of the daily mounted training period can be carried out on a double bridle.

When this training begins, a great deal of care should be taken that too much is not asked from the youngster in the early stages. Apart from the difficulty of carrying his head in the new position while actually moving, if not carefully carried out there is a tendency to shorten the animal's stride and thus, at a very important stage in its training, start impeding the free forward movement so necessary to the smoothness of the stride and for the comfort of the rider.

It will be realised by anyone attempting to train a young horse that it is at this stage also that the use of the lower part of the leg becomes essential as a means of maintaining impulsion.

The trainer should be satisfied with any small response he may get to the "feeling" of the reins, particularly with regard to the relaxing of the lower jaw. When he feels that the horse walks freely forward with a light tension on the reins, and the lower jaw is responding in consequence of that feeling, a trot may now be attempted.

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As the training progresses, however, the rider should guard against one evasion in particular frequently attempted by every horse at this period—*i.e.*, a sudden attempt or series of attempts to break into a canter. These attempts should at once be prevented and the trot resumed as soon as possible. If ignored, as so frequently happens with an inexperienced trainer, it will have the effect of the horse cantering behind his bridle.

Care should be taken that an equal amount of work is done in each direction. As training continues to progress, care should also be taken that the correct lateral bend is effected when making the various turns and circles, which will be carried out from time to time.

Work at the canter should only be attempted when both direct and lateral flexions are thoroughly mastered at the walk and trot. If this plan is adhered to, cantering should present no novel difficulties to the trainer.

✧ CHAPTER TWELVE ✧

✧ LOOSE JUMPING ✧

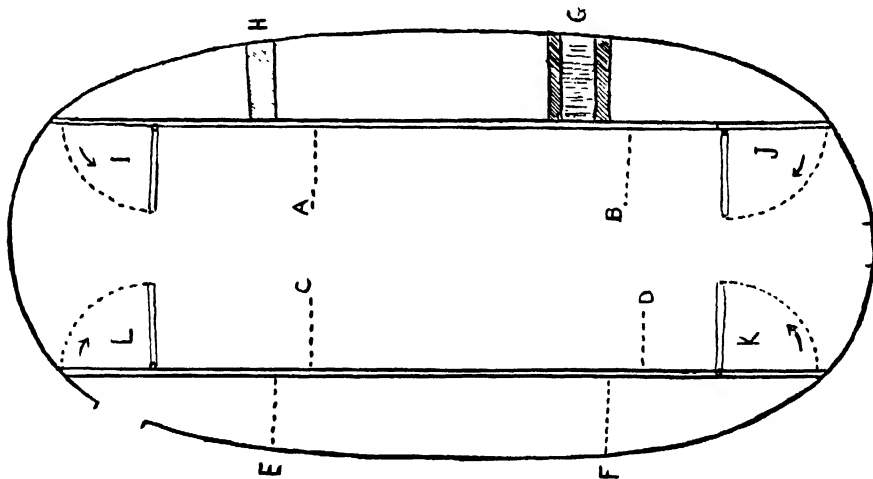
IT is frequently contended that to teach a horse which it is proposed to make into a hunter to jump loose in a school is neither necessary nor advisable. This contention is frequently followed by the advice: "Take him out hunting and start him over 'natural' obstacles, not those you erect in the school." I firmly believe, however, that if it were possible for *all* horses to *begin* their jumping education riderless (for preference in a jumping lane or closed school), there would be many more proficient hunters and much less damage would be done to fences. The point of importance regarding "loose" jumping is to realise that it is merely a means to an end and not a means of *completing* any horse's education, be he hunter, show jumper, or steeplechaser. Personally, I am not very keen on jumping a horse on a lunging rope or in long reins unless it is a case of real necessity. It is possible to erect a *small* lane in very limited space, and at very little cost. Prior to giving advice on the method of using a jumping lane, there are one or two points which must be considered. First the type of lane must be decided on. I am not a devotee of the long straight lane, and much prefer one similar to the lane illustrated. When horses get to "know" the *long* lane, they rush down it at much too fast a pace, regardless of the type of fence they are taking on. This lane also necessitates too many helpers in the earlier stages of training and frequently too much "whip." The lane which I use myself is egg-shaped, and about 55 yards long by 18 yards wide. On each side there are *two* distinct lanes, which can be blocked at either or all ends as required (*vide* Sketch No. 21). If duplicate and shorter lanes are used, one or at most two assistants only are necessary. Further, as will be explained, it

LOOSE JUMPING

can at any time be used as a *short* straight lane, thus having the advantage of not being long enough to allow the development of too much pace.

The next point to be considered is exactly for what purpose it is proposed to use the lane—*i.e.*, whether to train a young horse or to improve an older horse's jumping; in each case the *time available* for the purpose is of primary importance.

In the case of the young unschooled horse, it *must* be realised that care should be taken to conduct the lessons with due consideration to age and physical condition. Considerable time is therefore essential for the necessary development of jumping muscles. *In all cases* it must be borne in mind that the art of deriving full benefit from a lane is in teaching the horse to go freely and willingly, without a lot of *unnecessary* whip-cracking. There is usually far too much of this whip-cracking in jumping lanes, and mostly is entirely unnecessary; it ought to be the object of the trainer to *teach* the horse to *go* round freely, not merely to “knock” him round. If the excessive use of the lunging whip is persisted in, instead of the pupil looking at and measuring the fences, he is looking back at the trainer; he will therefore be much more interested in trying to get out of the way of the whip which “attacks” him all too frequently.



No. 21.—THE JUMPING LANE

USING THE LANE

We will assume that the animal to be trained is a green four-year-old, and that we have plenty of time in front of us. All the gates which enclose the two lanes at the side should be closed. In consequence the trainer is left with an ordinary egg-shaped menage, *entirely devoid of jumps*, the sole occupants being the trainer, his assistant, and the horse. The latter is then loosed, the trainer being at one end of the school and the assistant going to the other, each with a light lunging whip. The horse should be induced to go quietly round and round the empty school a few times at a trot, then stopped, and given a few oats or some delicacy.

The procedure should then be repeated, this time in the reverse direction. This change of direction is of considerable importance, as a young horse should be taught to jump equally well whichever leg is leading. As soon as the pupil goes round without being excited, the first "jump" may be introduced. This should be one pole about six inches in diameter, and should be placed *on the ground* at any one of the points A, B, C, or D, and the pupil again sent round in both directions. When little or no notice is taken of this pole on the ground, by degrees, at the points A, B, C, and D, other poles should be placed—*still on the ground*. When the pupil quietly trots or canters round over these poles, they may be all raised slightly and the procedure repeated. If this advice is adhered to, any horse will take to ordinary jumping with ease. Indeed, it is surprising how quickly the rails can be raised to a height of two feet or two and a half feet without any unnecessary use of the whip. It should be remembered, however, that though the pupil is jumping these small obstacles with ease, actually he is also being trained to take a quite difficult jump—*i.e.*, the single rail. The higher this rail becomes the more difficult it is for the horse to negotiate it. A single rail *always* requires careful jumping even when training is completed.

When the trainer realises that the pupil understands thoroughly what is expected of him, it is advisable to vary the type of fence to be jumped. A few railway-sleepers can act as a wall, and added to as required. Brush

✦————— LOOSE JUMPING —————✦

fences of various heights being available, a small one can be profitably introduced. With regard to brush fences, we are told by our hunting friends that a horse should brush through this type of fence. I advise readers to put a rail just below the top of, and immediately behind, their educational fence, thus ensuring from the commencement that the pupil shall learn that such fences are not to be trifled with. *If experience* subsequently teaches this same animal what he can “chance” and what he must jump, I do not mind, but I like them over the top to start with. When these various fences are negotiated with ease, then a further step forward may be taken.

It will be noticed that on one side of my lane there is a bank with a ditch to it on each side, and also a plain ditch some 15 yards from the bank. As both these jumps must necessarily be fixtures, when it is decided to use the outside portion of the lane, training must commence, over these two obstacles only, before anything else is attempted. Further, I think that both these jumps can only be taught by one method if whipping is to be avoided.

It is therefore necessary, in using this (outside) portion of the lane, to open one of the gates which enclose these two sides. I suggest that the gate to be opened is the one farthest from the exit. A cavesson should also be put on the pupil, and one of the lunging reins attached to the ring on the front of it, and an assistant (with the rein coiled in one hand) should lead the youngster down the lane towards the ditch. Having allowed the youngster to examine it, which in all probability he will with much interest, the assistant should first of all go back a few yards and then return to the ditch. This time, instead of stopping, he should just hop across it, at the same time lengthening the long rein. In 99 per cent. of cases the horse will follow, and should be at once rewarded in some way. If by any chance the animal does not follow the assistant across the ditch, the fact of the latter having the rein in his hand prevents the pupil turning away from the ditch, and a very light flick of the lunging whip below the hocks given by the trainer will soon have the desired effect. Before proceeding further, the young horse should be led backwards and forwards over the ditch until there is no sign of hesitation on his part.

Now we must try the bank, also a fixture, and a seemingly much more formidable obstacle. I do not think, however, there should be more difficulty with it than was encountered at the ditch, if we adopt exactly the same procedure. Do not vary it in any way until it is absolutely certain that your pupil does not show the slightest hesitation in following the assistant, at which point we should take our next step forward.

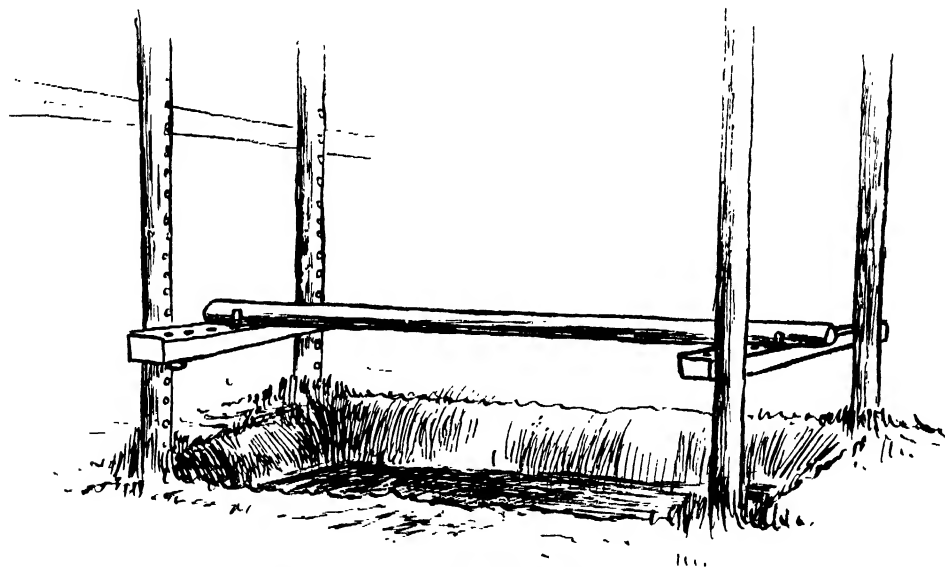
This time the rein, instead of being tied to the cavesson, should simply be passed through the back part of the nose-band, but not secured to it. When the assistant starts towards the bank, he should gently pull the rein (which at once becomes free) and continue over the bank as before. I have never known any case when a horse has failed to follow the assistant, because, through the rein having been released, the animal is loose in reality. When the trainer is satisfied that his pupil thoroughly understands what is required, he should instruct the assistant to repeat the procedure as far as the ditch on the take-off side of the bank, but he must be told to stop there, and to allow the youngster to pass him, going on over the bank unaccompanied. When this is accomplished successfully, we have obtained the objective. Even now, however, we have more work to do, but on one side of the lane only—*i.e.*, the whole length is to be negotiated, which means the jumping of both the ditch and the bank entirely loose.

The final procedure recommended for this side of the lane is as follows: The assistant leads the horse as before to the ditch, which I think will give little trouble. On landing the pupil may appear a little disconcerted for a moment, but a click of the tongue, or light application just below the hocks of the lunging whip, will at once make him give attention to his work, and the bank will be quickly negotiated alone. At the end of two or three lessons the horse ought to go perfectly easily and freely down the side of the lane containing the ditch and the bank. Prior to leaving discussion of this side of the lane, it is probably advisable to explain our next plan of campaign concerning the ditch and the bank.

I think it can be safely said that if there is a fence which gives more trouble to a trainer than anything else, it is the one with a ditch towards him. In Sketch No. 22 it will be seen that at either *end* of the ditch

LOOSE JUMPING

there is a horizontal stand about 2 feet 6 inches high, which extends the full width of the ditch; there is also a perpendicular stand on both sides of the ditch. In the horizontal stand, holes are bored vertically so that they can contain an iron peg about 9 inches long altogether. This arrangement is to help the trainer with his pupil's difficulty in jumping with the ditch towards him, and it is accomplished in the following manner: When the trainer finds that the horse goes freely over the ditch and bank, he can with advantage place a pole on the ground in a line with the edge of the take-off side of the ditch, which will of course give the effect of having the ditch *away from the pole*. By degrees, as training progresses, this pole can be raised up the VERTICAL stand on the take-off side until it is in line with the horizontal stand, and from that time onwards it can be gradually worked along this horizontal stand just a slot at a time. The alteration in the pole from the take-off to the landing side of the fence will be so gradual that the pupil will hardly notice the change, and in a very short time the pole can safely be placed at the furthestmost side of the ditch without any sign of a refusal. Since adopting this method, I have no recollection of ever having had a single failure at this type of jump.



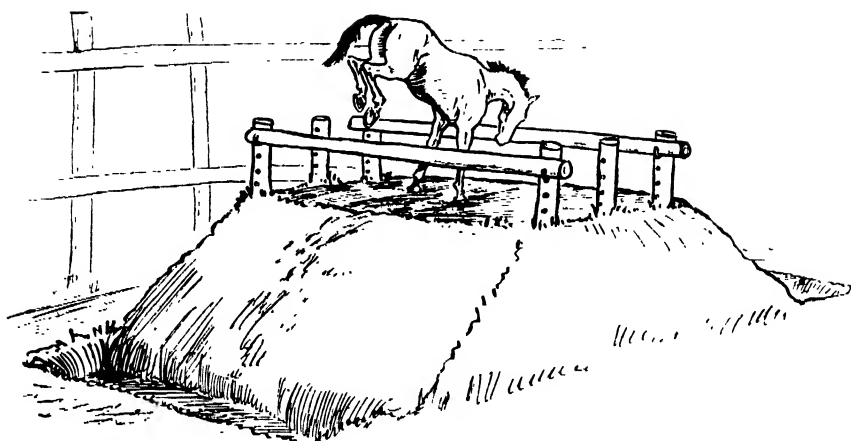
No. 22.—THE ADJUSTABLE OPEN DITCH

—*— LOOSE JUMPING —*—

In addition to the pole, the trainer can also use a portable brush fence on exactly the same lines. The fence should, as in the case of the pole, *first of all* be placed so that the ditch is invisible from the take-off side, and will naturally become a small one on the landing side. Gradually this fence can be eased along a few inches at a time, until the whole of the ditch is exposed to the horse, and the fence is ultimately on the extreme edge of the landing side. If this method appears a little too slow for my "thrusting" friends, it has the redeeming feature of seldom if ever failing.

As training progresses we can also arrange for our bank to be a little more formidable. I should like to point out, however, for those who may say when this jump is described that it is entirely unnecessary and too formidable, that it is not so. If the horse is *trained* on the lines I advocate, the bank has the redeeming feature of making him extremely clever, which is always a help, not only in the hunting-field, but at all other times. It will be seen from the diagram that there are three posts on top of, and at each side of the bank. In each post are bored several holes to a height of 2 feet 9 inches (I do not think they should be any higher). A pole should be placed at the foot of the middle post on the ground, and the horse sent down the lane as before. On seeing the pole he will probably be slightly disconcerted, but as it is on the ground this is likely to cause little trouble, and when he has been rewarded on the landing side, he should be sent down the lane again two or three times.

Once he deals easily with the pole on the ground (of the bank), it should be gradually raised a slot at a time up to a height of about 2 feet. When this has been safely negotiated a step further can be attempted. Instead of putting a pole in the middle of the bank, place one pole at the foot of each of the other two uprights, again on the ground, and the first procedure should be repeated. The poles may eventually be raised, and will have the effect of making a very small but important in-and-out post and rails on top of the bank (Sketch No. 23). I hope readers will not turn down this particular jump under the impression that it is dangerous, unnecessary, or formidable. It has inevitably been of service to me when dealing with horses which are casual in their jumping. If the word "graduation" has been the keynote of the training, there will be little



No. 23.—THE BANK WITH RAILS IN POSITION

or no chance of even a single refusal, whilst the benefit derived from it is inestimable.

Unless the trainer wishes to add any other type of fence to his ditch, I think we can safely say that our young horse will thoroughly understand jumps on that side of the lane, so we can now deal with the other.

Again we take nothing for granted, and we empty the side of the lane so that it is entirely devoid of jumps. The horse should be led down the empty lane, and at the other end should be rewarded with oats, etc. He should then be led 10 or 12 yards back to where the trainer should be standing, be turned round and allowed to go to the end of the lane to the oats once more; led down the lane half-way, and the procedure again repeated, until the whole length of this empty lane is traversed. By this time he will certainly know what is required of him. Now a pole should be placed on the ground at point G, and the youngster released to go the whole length and over this pole. After he has done so two or three times, place another pole on the ground at point H. Gradually these poles should be raised until they are roughly 3 feet in height. When it can be seen that the horse thoroughly understands what is required of him on that second side of the lane, we can continue and employ the method by which we started—*i.e.*, he can be allowed to go round the whole circle. This

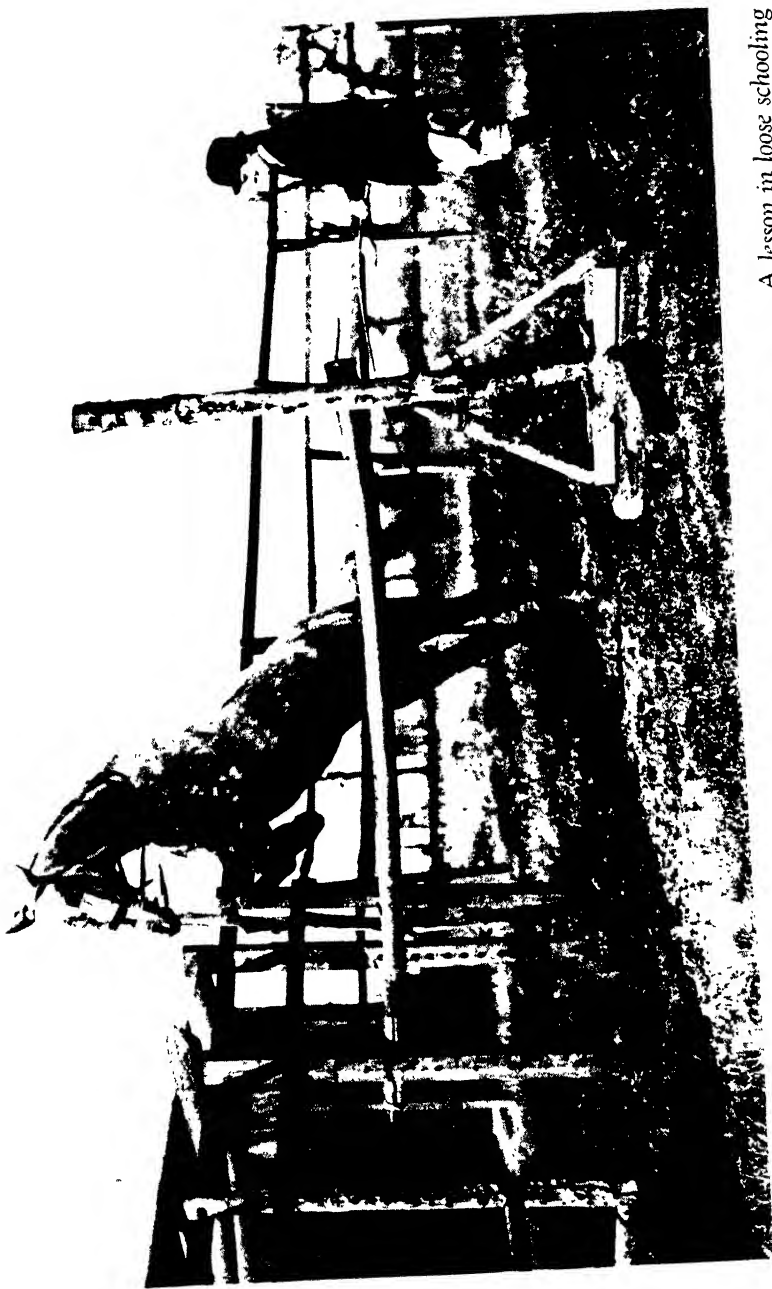
LOOSE JUMPING

is accomplished by having the gates at points I, J, K, and L opened, so that instead of being kept in the inside portion of the lane and going round over A, B, C, and D jumps, the circuit will remain over jumps E, F, G, and H. I advise when the complete circuit of the school is attempted, that the jumps at points E and F be reduced to about a foot in height, that the pole in front of the ditch be on the take-off side, and that there be nothing on the bank. The jumps can be gradually raised and the poles replaced on the bank at the discretion of the trainer. In addition to any jumps I have so far mentioned, if there are any jumps peculiar to a country or competition they can, of course, be substituted in place of any of those I have mentioned. I advise, however, that they should be placed at one of the points E or F.

It will be remembered that in advocating the whole of this procedure, I assumed we were dealing with a young untrained horse, and that we had considerable time in front of us. I hope the trainer will always bear this in mind, and not attempt to take any short-cut with a young horse. If my advice is followed, he will usually find that his pupil will progress much faster than he anticipated; but this, I am afraid, is frequently the undoing of many an inexperienced trainer. They get a little elated at the success of their efforts and frequently try to push on too fast. The result is generally a refusal, and I disapprove of such a thing taking place. It rarely ought to occur if the trainer has been properly patient.

In addition to training the young horse, the lane that I use can also be employed for the re-training of older ones. In this case, however, I do not think it is advisable to use the complete circumference of the school unless there is considerable time for training. I say this because if a *short time only is available* the method I have just described would probably entail too much whip-cracking, and that, I consider, should be avoided as much as possible. If, however, we use the method described for teaching the bank and ditch and use one side of the school only at a time, we can erect any jump which is particularly required for the horse whose jumping is to be improved.

In the case of older horses, which are in consequence more physically fit, we can safely make a little faster progress. At the same time, I con-



A lesson in loose schooling

Plate XXXIV.

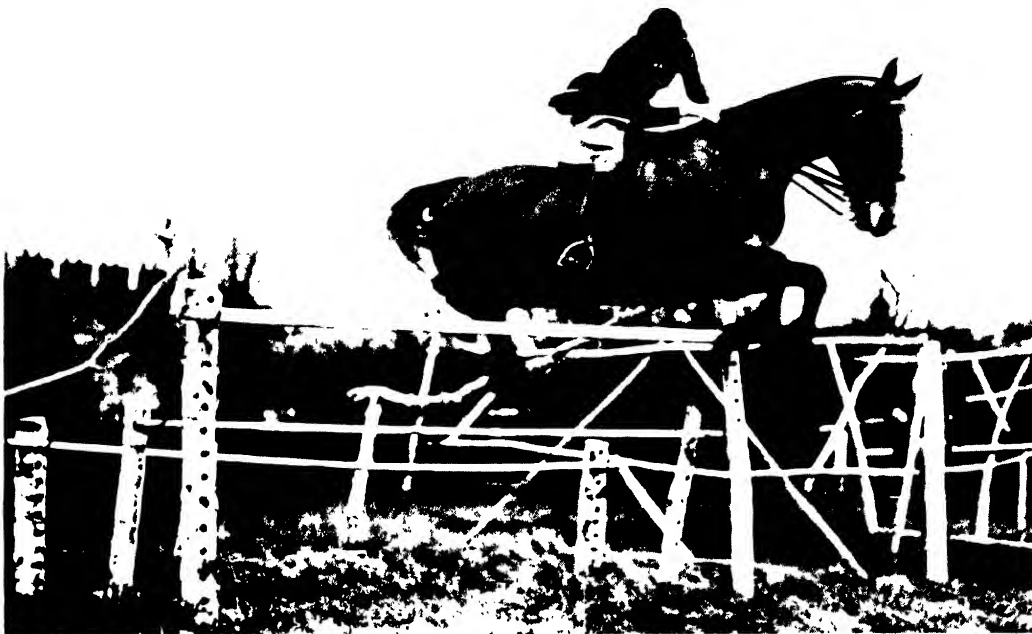


Plate XXXV.

Over the triple bars



Plate XXXVI.

Spiked palms with fixed barbed wire 4 ft. on landing side To arrive correctly at this is essential

LOOSE JUMPING

sider that we ought again to start from zero, as the art of getting a horse to jump loose is to let him jump freely.

If, then, we start with our empty lane as before, and gradually raise our jumps, we shall from the commencement ensure the animal going freely from one end of the lane to the other.

Before closing the subject of loose jumping, I should like to remind readers about one particular jump which in the present day holds us up in the hunting-field all too frequently. I am alluding to iron railings.

As will be seen from some of the photographs in this book, in my own school I have endeavoured to train all my school horses over not only plain iron railings, but spiked ones as well.

If my reader will look at one photograph in particular he will see that in addition to jumping spiked railings, which in the ordinary way most people would consider bad enough, I have also arranged a jump in which there is fixed barbed wire the same height as the spiked railings and 4 feet on the landing side. If this is possible over such an obstacle, then with very little training a horse can certainly be taught to jump plain iron railings, and, moreover, this can be accomplished with little or no chance of injury to the horse. During the last few years I have found this more than useful on several occasions, where otherwise I should have had to go a considerable way round had my horse not been schooled over this type of obstacle. Naturally I leave the question of the spikes to individuals, but I always feel that it is the human brain that puts the spikes there, and in consequence there is a certain amount of lack of confidence in attempting to jump it.

I have had the spikes up in my school field for the last four years; they have been jumped hundreds of times by different pupils, and I have never had a single accident or cut during the whole of that time.

I only hope by including this chapter on loose jumping that those who disagree on principle with this form of training will read it through patiently and not pass it over lightly. I have found the practice of untold value, and do not know how I could have done without it, but I have always used it as a means to an end. The end I invariably have in view is the teaching of a horse to get used to jumping all sorts of obstacles. During this form of

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training I have seen horses get into all sorts of positions, hitting the rails extremely hard and yet never falling. I know, however, from observation and experience, that if a rider had been on the horse's back and had got into the same positions, it would have been an absolute impossibility for the rider to have ridden at the fence so confidently, and he is bound to know that he is coming wrong. Even if he had got thus far with confidence (which I very much doubt), it would have been almost impossible for him to have sat on the horse's back comfortably. He would therefore have retained his balance by the reins, and in consequence the horse's mouth and jumping would have suffered. I use my lane as indicated purely and simply as a means to an end, and I have always found that when the training in the lane has been completed I have little or no difficulty in getting horses to face my schooling jumps. At the same time as the horse is being trained to jumping loose, the trainer is naturally training or re-training him during the other periods of the day, and the process of balancing and loose jumping being accomplished, there has been little difficulty with any horse I have ever had in getting them to go equally well round my school jumps and from there out hunting or into the show-ring as the occasion required.

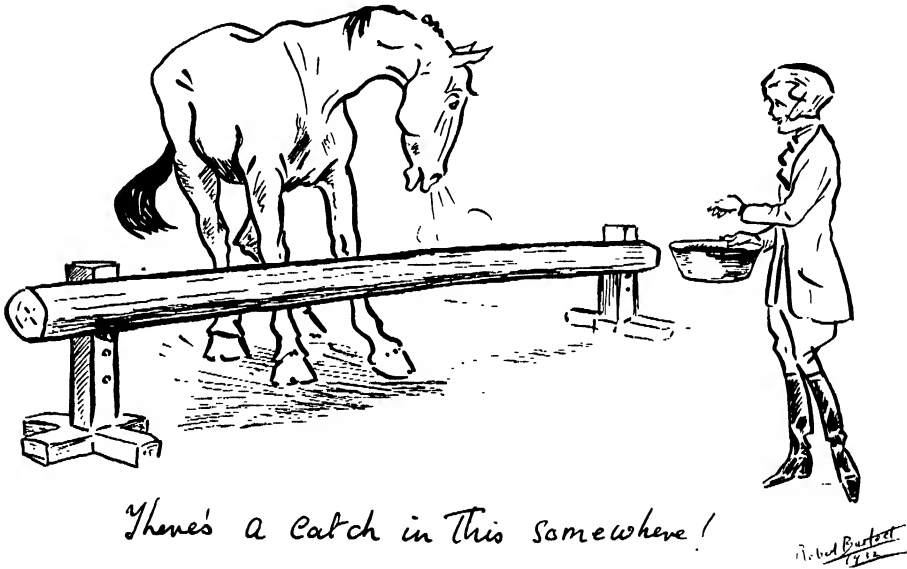
If by any chance a closed school is available in addition to an outside lane, I think, with young horses in particular, that it is preferable to commence training inside instead of in the lane. At all times the closed school has the advantage of not allowing anything to distract the attention of the young horse, and it provides the same conditions as when using an outside lane with the doors at points I, J, K, L being closed. I do not mean that the training should be continued and concluded in the closed school, but in the elementary stages it will be found advantageous to use it. When the young horse is taken to the outside lane the similarity in the methods used there and in the closed building will soon make itself apparent and progress will not be impeded in any way.

As stated in another chapter, I consider that the training of all horses, whether for show jumping or hunting, can very profitably be started on exactly the same lines. The procedure recommended is one that I have used for many years with considerable success.

Often when discussing with others the subject of jumping I have seen

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by their expression or have heard them ask the question, "Does this man think we have a life-time at our disposal for each horse's training?" But I take comfort in the thought that even if the four-year-olds entrusted to my charge have lost the first bloom of youth when they eventually emerge, they do at least know how to jump. This is more than can be said of the practices of some trainers.



✧ CHAPTER THIRTEEN ✧

✧===== SHOW JUMPING =====✧

RING jumping in this country still occupies a rather peculiar position in the field of sport. At agricultural shows it is acknowledged as one of the chief draws from the point of view of the gate, for "horse jumping" has a very real attraction for the "man in the street." From this we might expect to find a greater and certainly more intelligent interest displayed in the stands which are largely occupied by the hunting fraternity. Here, one would think, we should find appreciation of the finer points, the skill required in training, and the accuracy shown in riding over heights; but this too frequently is not the case. Instead, we find that the whole business is constantly being decried because it is said that this or that performer "would be no good for hunting." This is a peculiar form of criticism. Though racing has many opponents, I do not think I have ever heard of the winner of the Middle Park Stakes being held up to ridicule because he would not carry Mr. X or Mrs. Y in a dingdong thirty minutes across Blankshire.

In its early days in England the show-jumping game may certainly have been a ragtime affair. In view of its popularity on the Continent, and the fine horsemen, both military and civilian, who have in recent years devoted so much time and energy to it in this country, I claim that it at least deserves to be taken seriously by all interested in riding. I can assure my hunting readers that it will repay attention, for many of the methods employed by its finest exponents are actually of considerable value in training horses for the hunting-field. Those who have taken it up, and have battled with and overcome the elusive difficulties which it presents, know that it is worthy in itself to take its proper place in the honourable list of our national sports.

SHOW JUMPING

In selecting a horse for show-jumping purposes, I think one of the most important considerations is to choose one with a placid temperament.

An animal of the more excitable type may make many spectacular jumps, as one frequently sees, but is never sufficiently consistent ever to reach the highest class. That huge prices are frequently given by acknowledged experts for a horse of the right stamp is sufficient proof of the difficulty which exists in finding one ideal for the purpose. Placidity must be accompanied by the necessary outstanding jumping ability, and boldness to face the large obstacles which the high standards of today require. I much prefer well-bred animals, because I think their intelligence is far in excess of those of commoner type.

We will now assume that the horse of the right type has been secured, so our next step is to discuss the method of dealing with him. In dealing with any sort of horse (as stated elsewhere), this method must undergo variations as we become more fully acquainted with the individual characteristics of our pupil, but we must bear in mind that the early training of all jumpers is carried out on the same lines.

When you decide to take up this "game of show jumping," please remember that it is one of the most disappointing of games, AND the most misunderstood. You probably possess a horse which, when at home, is a "smasher," but apparently does not even see a jump when in the ring. You may own another which is really good when in the ring, but for several shows he just takes a lath or possibly two. You say bad luck, your horse was trying all right, but his luck was out, though in these days he will be an "also ran" with a half-fault. No matter how good a jumper is or how much money he has won in the past, to continue winning he must continue to jump cleanly. If you possess a good show hack or hunter, you know by the entries that in many cases you will win, or nearly so, prior to leaving the stables, but in show jumping as in hunting it is the glorious uncertainty which makes half the attraction.

The first point of importance to be considered when mounted training commences is that a horse, whatever ability he may possess in clearing height, is of little use if unable to clear satisfactorily the 14 feet of water to be met at most of the agricultural shows. For this reason, I invariably

—*— SHOW JUMPING —*—

START my novices by training them over water. If they demonstrate their inability to "spread themselves," I at once realise that show jumping is not their vocation, and endeavour to find them a more congenial task.

The second point of importance in mounted training is to remember that the heights of the jumps met with in the show-ring are considerably higher than those usually "taken on" in the hunting-field. In view of this, it must be realised by all that it is an absolute impossibility to continue to have the various practice jumps fixed when they are over a certain height. So many falls would follow that not only horses but riders would be seriously injured. Yet a jump which falls down when hit has a very definite psychological effect upon a horse. On making the discovery that it will give way if precautionary measures are not taken, he is likely to treat it with contempt. It is here that we encounter the first fundamental difference between the show jumper and the hunter. And it is just here that most writers draw a veil over the proper means of circumventing the difficulty in question. I will not pay them the left-handed compliment of saying that they do it from ignorance, so I must assume that these writing experts do not wish to tell the public exactly how horses are trained for show jumping in case a charge of cruelty is levelled against them. And why? Because they are afraid of being coupled with those who *abuse* legitimate methods, and rather than differentiate between correction and its exaggeration into brutality, they ignore the whole subject.

I USE A RAPPING-POLE By this I mean that, rather than give a horse a possibly serious and injurious fall over high fixed rails, I ensure that he shall not disregard a collapsible fence, by the dexterous use of a light bar of bamboo. In discussing the use of this appliance, it is necessary to explain that once our horse has satisfied us with his potential ability to jump heights, his training must be carried out over *much* LOWER obstacles. If during training over these comparatively easy fences he is rapped quietly on the forelegs (first of all) by someone on the ground in the act of jumping, it will convey to him the fact that it is necessary to avoid at all times any possibility of touching, however slightly, any obstacle which he negotiates. Should such a procedure be adopted only over similar fences to those used in the show-ring, their formidable appearance combined with the added

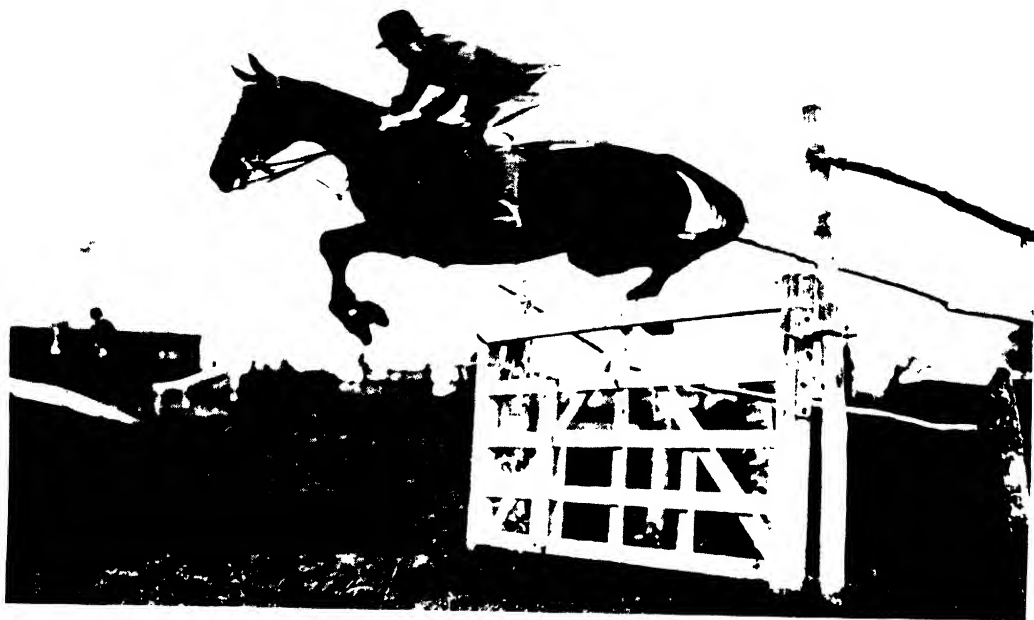


Plate XXXVII.

A show jumping seat, but not exaggerated



Plate XXXVIII.

An exaggerated seat which has no bearing on the result obtained



Plate XXXIX.

A pointless position.



Plate XL.

Another position in which there is no advantage

—*— SHOW JUMPING —*

deterrent might cause him to refuse. If, however, his education in this respect has been begun over low fences, this pole may *occasionally* be used over the higher jumps without any special association in his mind between show fences, as such, and being rapped. By the use of the rapping-pole we convey to the horse the importance of jumping cleanly in all circumstances, as apart from being satisfied with merely arriving safely on the other side.

In show jumping there are two distinct ways of riding at fences:

- (a) Where the take-off is determined by the rider; and
- (b) Where the horse "does it all," except that the rider "steers."

I think that the former method is now absolutely necessary in this country, as show jumping has reached such a high standard of excellence that to win a competition a clean round is usually essential. To accomplish this, it is practically necessary for the horse to take off from the ideal distance from each fence, and there are few horses which can be trusted to do this unaided at seven or eight fences one after another. One of the few exceptions was the late Captain Muir's "Sea Count," and his owner rider showed us all how it was possible to sit absolutely still without interfering in any way. I am sure that many admirers of the late Brigadier Malise Graham did not realise what an artistic performance he always (not occasionally) put up on "Broncho." Everyone loved to see this combination go round the course at Olympia, but few realised that without "Malise Graham" Broncho would not have gone far, for in that case the *rider* did it all. Just let Broncho "come a little wrong," and that would have been quite a good enough excuse to stop, but one of the greatest artists we shall ever see at this game saw to it that Broncho never "came wrong."

If the horse is to be taught in the way which I have advocated, all the methods and contraptions, devices, schemes, and inducements to make a horse jump are utterly useless and of no avail whatever, unless he is trained so that he will allow his rider to help him in the only way a rider can. The one part of a horse's *burden* which is any use to him when jumping a fence is the rider's brain. If the animal is not prepared to act instantaneously on instruction received, this at once becomes useless. A show jumper must be

= SHOW JUMPING =

ready to respond, and in order to respond he must be balanced and collected in his paces, and in order to be balanced and collected he must be bridled. To obtain this perfection of balance in our horse, much time must be spent in a school of some description.

During the approach to a fence, the whole end to which the rider's powers are directed is to bring the horse "right" at each obstacle in turn, and here we come to the elusive subject of "timing." By this I mean that during the approach to a fence the rider is not only capable of seeing the exact spot from which his horse should take off, but is able to regulate the strides to this end. At one jump it will be necessary to increase the pace (say) four strides from the jump, whereas at the next he may have to "hold down" to two strides, or at the next three, and so on. It will at once be seen how necessary it is to ride a well-balanced, receptive animal, as the signal given by the rider to increase the pace must be acted on instantaneously by the horse, or the rider's judgment will have been useless. I do not think that it is possible to commit to paper any rules for learning the art of timing, except that of practice over low obstacles on various horses. I learnt over a low pole about 18 inches high, and jumped this same obstacle about one or two hundred times daily for about two years. No matter what difficulties it presents, I consider that the ability to "time" is absolutely essential in this country if one is to have any hope of a successful show-jumping career. After all, it can only be a combination of eye, brain, and muscle control.

As the training progresses, occasional "schools" may take place over practice jumps similar to those to be met with in the actual show-ring, but these schools should be of rare occurrence. I am certain that there are more horses spoilt through over-jumping at home than from any other cause. If two or three fences are jumped well, get off at once and use the feed tin; why go on until a fence *is* hit? A horse knows when he has jumped *over* and not hit an obstacle. If he has jumped, wasn't that what you required?—so get off. If, however, he hits a fence, stay on by all means, *and* use the rapping-pole, because that is what it is for. When this pole has been effective, and your horse has cleared the obstacle, get off, but, again, do *not forget the feed tin*. A considerable amount of time must be spent in training before

SHOW JUMPING

any attempt can be made to jump in a show, and when this is eventually attempted it is wise to go to some small show where there is a local class. In these classes the jumps, being lower than in the open events, are less likely to interfere with the objective to which previous training has been directed—namely, the production of a freegoing type of horse. Every chance of refusal through over-facing should be avoided at all costs.

From now on the rate of progress entirely depends on the nature and aptitude of the horse. Some take longer than others, but at the risk of once more disappointing my readers I can assure them that many of the best in this country have taken two and three years before they have reached their prime. Indeed, if enquiries were made, in all probability it would be found that even longer has been taken by some.

So far I have merely explained one way of show jumping. The alternative method in which the horse “does it all” cannot need much explanation. Naturally more time must be given to the loose schooling of the horse in the early stages, and it follows that the rider must be chiefly concerned in avoiding interference with him. I consider that this is a much less skilful proceeding, and moreover one which facts have hitherto proved less successful.

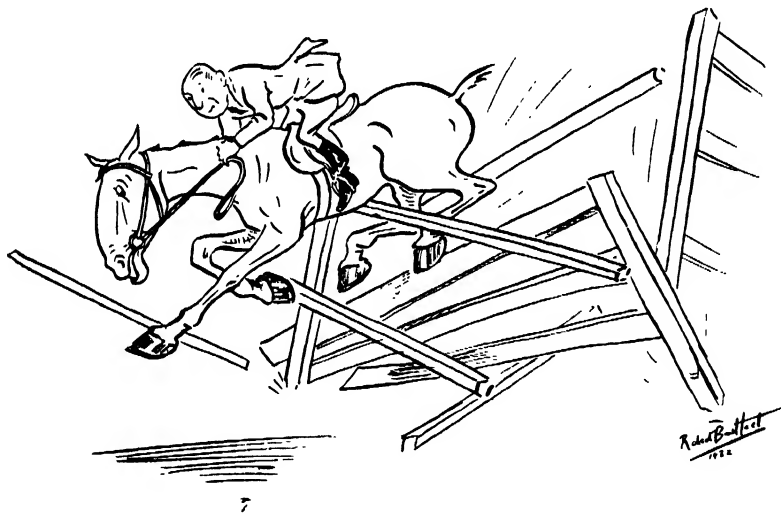
I much regret that TIME (not “timing”) threatens to be an important factor, and that only just over a minute may be allowed to complete the course at Olympia. Admittedly our own authorities are merely falling into line with Continental rules, but I cannot in any circumstances think why it should become necessary to go very fast at a high gate which common sense tells should be jumped off the hocks. With this introduction of pace it becomes essential to go fast at every jump, no matter of what type it is. This appears to me to be making a move in the wrong direction, as all skill, except for “sitting on,” seems at once to disappear.

With regard to the seat when show jumping, I always feel that this is the real bone of contention between the hunting man and the show-ring rider. Moreover, in most cases the very peculiar seats we see are imagined by some people to be the forward seat. Such is not the case. The forward seat is merely a movement of the body from the waist upwards, the legs being drawn backwards from the knee downwards only in so far as the practical

SHOW JUMPING

purpose of impulsion requires. The exaggerated seats which one observes in the ring are freak seats peculiar to the riders themselves, not necessarily ineffective for the purpose for which they are employed, nor as useless as many outsiders think. Neither, on the other hand, are they an absolute necessity in this sphere of jumping.

So much for the oft discussed and abused "show-jumping seat" which I have purposely left until now. Although it is this phase of show jumping which most claims the attention of the casual observer, it is relatively unimportant compared with the deftness, patience, and skill displayed in the approach. As each different fence in rotation is dealt with in a manner varying with each type by some outstanding master of his craft, as for instance Mr. "Tommy" Glencross, then the spectator may rest assured that he is indeed watching a display of that "art which conceals art."



*"When at home he's a smasher"
(and in the ring too by jove!)"*

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